THE FANTASTIC FOUR®

MARVEL MASTERWORKS®

BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

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PRESENTS

THE Fantastic FOUR

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& ANNUAL No. 5

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MARVEL MASTERWORKS
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INTRODUCTION
BY JOE SINNOTT

Looking back through *The Fantastic Four* issues #61-71, it is needless to say that these were more than just a great series of comic books. Starting at issue #44, Stan, Jack and I turned out a run that we were very proud to have created together back during the 1960s.

Some of my favorite covers I did with Jack were created during this period. Many were special favorites. Numbers 61, 65, 66, 67 and 69 especially stand out, but to pin it down to one cover, I would have to select #69. I wish Sue was included in it, but it has all the elements of a truly great cover. First of all, I was always partial to white backgrounds, the composition was flawless with a great city down-shot by Jack, and the craggy bricks and falling debris topped it all off. Jack always amazed me with the detailed buildings he created. No one else could ever do them quite like he could! On the cover to #69 the crumbling rocks, bricks and other types of debris fascinated me. If that wasn't enough, I especially liked it when the Human Torch would flame on and fly over the city—this cover had it all!

As great as Jack's compositions were on his covers, I always felt that his splash pages were even better! Just take a look at the splash pages in these issues! #61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 70...just fantastic (pardon the pun)! Jack was the master of extraordinary machines. One of his most outstanding devices appeared on the splash page of issue #64. You can imagine just how long it took me to ink this panel. I must have lost money on that page, spending so much time with all that intricate "Kirby Tech," but it was well worth the satisfaction of completing such a page with Jack. Those splash pages were always much anticipated by the fans.

I was always careful to give full attention to detail in backgrounds that Jack created, as the visual aspect of them was so important to give dimension and reality to the comic-book pages. To embellish the pages in these issues I used a #3 Winsor Newton series #7 brush, a Hunt #102 pen, a compass, waterproof India ink and a ruler. I never used a French curve—but looking back I wish that I had. It would have made things a lot easier on some of those outstanding machines Jack created! Another aspect of Jack's work that always seems to be mentioned by fans is the "Kirby Krackle." We used it to great effect countless times and it sure was part of the Kirby identity. For the record, I used different size speedball pens to embellish and more clearly define what Jack intended with his powerful "krackle" scenes. For an extra treat check out the original version of the #65 cover packed with "Kirby Krackle" and included as a special bonus in this volume.

As you can tell by now, I haven't commented on the Fantastic Four storylines in these issues. Stan was certainly at his writing peak during this period, and Jack and I were privileged to be given such great material to illustrate. Many comic readers put these stories in their rightful place at the top of great achievements in the comic field.

The '60s are a period in comic history that will never be duplicated. In my humble opinion *The Fantastic Four* was the best comic of this era. These books by Stan, Jack and me were some of the most satisfying work I ever had the pleasure of doing, and I am proud to have been part of these books. I have a hard time expressing in words the great feeling of achievement and satisfaction that working on these books gave me. I am pleased that all the fans have appreciated the efforts that we put into these issues of *Fantastic Four*.

Joltin' Joe Sinnott

2004

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

IN THIS EPOCHAL ISSUE:
THE END OF MISTER FANTASTIC?

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

IND. 61 APR

"WHERE STALKS THE SANDMAN?"

THE FABULOUS F.F.···IMPERILLED ANEW BY A MENACE FROM THE PAST!

"WHERE STALKS THE SANDMAN?"

SPASSK!

THANK HEAVEN WE'RE SAFELY BACK IN OUR *OWN QUARTERS* AT LAST, WHERE···

IT'S MY NEW *ATOM IGNITER!* IT'S HOMING IN ON *BEN*···AS IF IT HAS A MIND OF ITS *OWN!*

REED! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT *HAPPENED?*

DUCK, BEN! THAT RAY *MUSTN'T* HIT *YOU!*

I NEEDED *YOU* TA TELL ME THAT?

EXTRAVAGANTLY EXECUTED WITH EBULLIENT ERUDITION BY:

STAN LEE AND **JACK KIRBY**

INKED BY: JOE SINNOTT

LETTERED BY: SAM ROSEN

MAYBE OUR STORIES *ARE* A BIT STRETCHED-OUT, AS SOME MAVERICK MARVEL MALCONTENTS HAVE CLAIMED···BUT, YOU'VE GOTTA ADMIT THEY COME *ON* WITH A BANG, RIGHT, TIGER···?

BACK, SUE! GET BEHIND ME!

NOW IT'S TRAINING ITSELF UPON US!

HEY, STRETCHO.. IS THAT THING FER REAL?

YOU'LL FIND OUT IF IT EVER HITS YOU, BEN!

REED! IT'S GETTING CLOSER TO YOU! AND NOW...IT'S ABOUT TO HIT YOUR HAND!

IF I CAN JUST ENCLOSE YOU WITH MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD IN TIME..!

YOU DID IT, HONEY! THE RAY CAN'T GET THROUGH!

BUT, DARLING...I DON'T UNDERSTAND! HOW CAN A LIFELESS MACHINE SUDDENLY GO BERSERK THAT WAY??

IT CAN'T, SUE! THERE HAS TO BE SOME HUMAN AGENCY BEHIND ALL THIS... SOMEHOW!

WHILE YER BUSY MAKIN' SPEECHES, BIGDOME, OL' BLUE-EYED BENJAMIN'LL TACKLE THAT GOOFY GIZMO FROM BEHIND!

HANG ON, KIDDIES... I'M GONNA MAKE MINCEMEAT OUTTA IT!

NO, BEN... HOLD IT! IT'S TURNING TOWARDS YOU.. BEN..DON'T..!

TOO LATE! HE..HE TOOK THE FULL BRUNT OF THE BLAST!

LUCKILY, HE WAS PRESSED AGAINST THE BARREL.. SO HIS OWN POWERFUL BODY MUFFLED THE DEADLY IMPACT!

BUT, THE INTENSITY IS GROWING... IT'S HURLING HIM BACK..!

SUE! THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SAVE HIM...!

I KNOW! MY FORCE FIELD!

I'VE GOT TO REMOVE IT FROM US... AND THROW IT AROUND THE MACHINE ITSELF!

THERE! I DID IT!

BUT, THE RAY IS STILL ACTIVATED! WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THE PRESSURE BUILDS UP..??

DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, DARLING?

IT BLEW ITSELF UP! WE'LL BE SAFE NOW!

PTHOOM!

I'M AFRAID NOT, SUE!

THERE'LL BE NO SAFETY FOR US TILL WE LEARN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE... AND HOW TO STOP HIM!

BUT, YOU NEED REST, NOW, DEAR! YOU'VE OVER-TAXED YOURSELF!

BEN! WHAT ABOUT BEN...?

RELAX, SUSIE, BABY! I'M AS LOVABLE AS EVER!

I'M LUCKY THE EXPLOSION DIDN'T MESS AROUND WITH MY GOOD LOOKS!

BUT WHAT IN THE NAME O' MY SWINGIN' AUNT PETUNIA IZZIS ALL ABOUT??!

WE JUST GOT DONE CLOBBERIN' DOC DOOM, DIDN'T WE?*

DON'TCHA EVEN GET A COFFEE BREAK IN THIS BLASTED SUPER-HEROIN' BUSINESS??

*INDEED THEY DID, AS RAPTUROUSLY REVEALED IN OUR PARTICULARLY PRAISE-WORTHY PREVIOUS ISH!..CAPTION-CRAZY STAN!

HOLD IT DOWN TO A ROAR, OLD FRIEND! SUE HAS FALLEN ASL--

BEN!!

YEOWK!

NOW WHAT HIT ME?!!

MY REMOTE-CONTROL GRAVI-POLARIZERS! BUT---WHAT ACTIVATED THEM?

WHEN YA FIND OUT, LEMME KNOW, WILLYA?!!

HEY! WHO LIFTED ME UP?? WHO'S A WISE GUY AROUND HERE??

NOW I'M SWINGIN' ALL OVER THE JOINT! IF THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF A GAG, STRETCH---

IT'S NO GAG, BEN! IT'S SERIOUS--- DEADLY SERIOUS!

THOSE TWO MAGNETIC DEVICES WILL WHIRL YOU FASTER AND FASTER--UNTIL-- I-I'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!

EVEN BEN'S GREAT STRENGTH CAN'T SAVE HIM FROM DEATH BY CENTRIFUGAL FORCE---UNLESS I REACH THE CONTROL SWITCH IN TIME!!

CLICK

THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER-- SOMEONE HAS BROKEN INTO THE LAB AND RIGGED MY OWN EQUIPMENT TO ATTACK US WHEN WE ENTERED!

STAY WITH IT, OLD FRIEND! I'VE REACHED THE SWITCH! YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT NOW!

THE POLARIZERS ARE DE-ACTIVATED...! THEY CAN'T AFFECT YOU ANY MORE!

BEN! ARE YOU OKAY?? SAY SOMETHING, BIG FELLA--!!

WHAT A REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT THIS IS!!

THANK HEAVEN! I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE SO GLAD TO HEAR THAT PHRASE!

THUMMP!

NOW---HOW'S ABOUT CLUIN' ME IN ON WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE.. IN TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR LESS, HUH?

I WISH I COULD, BEN! ALL WE CAN BE SURE OF IS THAT SOME UNKNOWN FOE IS STALKING US.. RIGHT HERE IN OUR OWN HEAD-QUARTERS..!

CONGRATU-LATIONS, MISTER!

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?

YA HELD IT DOWN TO TWENTY-FIVE WORDS--- RIGHT ON THE BUTTON!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, IN A HEAVILY-GUARDED CASTLE IN FAR-OFF *LATVERIA*, WE FIND---

EVEN THOUGH *DOCTOR DOOM* HAS STOLEN MY *COSMIC POWER* ---I SHALL NEVER *YIELD!*

THE *SILVER SURFER* WILL NEVER CEASE STRIVING FOR *FREEDOM*---

THOUGH AN *ETERNITY* PASSES, MY *SPIRIT* WILL NEVER BE *CRUSHED!*

SHOW HIM THE *PICTURE* ONCE MORE!

I LIKE TO WATCH WHAT IT *DOES* TO THE HELPLESS FOOL!

LOOK! SEE THE REACHES OF *OUTER SPACE!* SEE THE UNENDING VASTNESS THAT YOU CALL *HOME!*

THE STAR-STUDDED *SKIES*---THE GREAT, GLISTENING *GALAXIES*--!

IF I COULD BUT *SEE* THEM ONCE MORE!

---TO RIDE THE CURRENTS OF THE COSMOS---TO ZOOM TOWARD THE BRINK OF *INFINITY*--!

I WOULD GIVE MY *LIFE*--!

YOU WILL GIVE YOUR LIFE, YOU SILVER-COATED *SWINE!!*

HAH! BUT YOU'LL NEVER SEE *SPACE* AGAIN! NOT WHILE *DR. DOOM* STILL LIVES!

YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE *BETTER* THAN WE *HUMANS*, EH?

NO! I NEVER SAID---

UHHH!

YOU'RE NOTHIN' BUT A ROTTEN *ALIEN!*

THIS IS WHAT WE DO TO *YOUR* KIND!

DO TO ME WHAT YOU WILL---IT MATTERS *NOT!* THE *LION* IS NOW SORE BESET BY JACKALS!

YET, HAD I BUT *ONE IOTA* OF MY *FORMER POWER*--- THE JACKAL WOULD BARK *NO MORE!*

YEAH? WE'LL *SEE* WHO'S THE *JACKAL* AROUND HERE WHEN *DR. DOOM* RETURNS!

WE WON'T BE *BACK*---TILL IT'S TIME FOR YOUR *EXECUTION!*

BUT, EVEN AS THE MERCILESS GUARDS SWAGGER TO THEIR POSTS IN THE GLOOMY CORRIDOR, A STRANGE FLYING *SURFBOARD*---GLEAMING WITH *POWER* BEYOND DESCRIPTION --- RETURNS TO ITS RIGHTFUL MASTER--!

OUTSIDE THE *WINDOW!!* CAN IT *BE??* DO MY TORTURED EYES *DECEIVE* ME---?

SECONDS LATER--CRACKLING WITH *COSMIC ENERGY*, TOO POTENT TO BE CONTAINED---THE IRON DOOR OF THE *SILVER SURFER'S* CELL IS BLASTED FROM ITS HINGES WITH AN EAR-SHATTERING *ROAR*--!

THOOM!

AND THEN, A SOLITARY FIGURE STRIDES FORTH---THE GREAT, GLISTENING, GLOWING FIGURE OF THE *SILVER SURFER*---THE MYSTERIOUS EMISSARY FROM THE FURTHEST REACHES OF SPACE, WHOSE *POWER* SURPASSES ALL MORTAL UNDERSTANDING--!

I AM *FREE* ONCE MORE--POSSESSED ONCE AGAIN OF THE ETERNAL ENERGY OF THE *COSMOS!*

AND, I HAVE LEARNED A TRAGIC *LESSON*.. LEARNED THAT *MAN* IS STEEPED IN *EVIL*--TAINTED WITH *TREACHERY!!*

THUS, I *TURN MY BACK* UPON THE HORRENDOUS *HUMAN RACE!!*

NEVERMORE SHALL ANY STRIP ME OF MY POWERS--- NEVERMORE SHALL I BE *CAPTIVE!*

BUT, WHAT OF THOSE WHO *TAUNTED* ME?? SHALL THEY ESCAPE *UNSCATHED*??

NAY! THROUGHOUT THE GALAXIES--- ON EVERY DISTANT STAR--- *ONE* TRUTH IS KNOWN---

THAT WHICH IS *REAPED* MUST ONE DAY BE *SOWN!*

THIS THEN IS THE DAY--- THE HOUR--THE *MOMENT*-- OF COSMIC *RETRIBUTION!*

KRAKK!

BUT, WHAT OF THE HARD-PRESSED *FANTASTIC FOUR*? EVEN AS THE *SILVER SURFER* ZOOMS AWAY OVER THE HORIZON, HALFWAY AROUND THE GLOBE, A FRANTIC SEARCH IS MADE AT FF HEADQUARTERS FOR THE HIDDEN, UNKNOWN *INTRUDER*---!

HEY, STRETCHO--- WHO IS IT WE'RE *LOOKIN'* FOR?

I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST *IDEA*, BEN!

THEN, HOW IN BLAZES CAN WE *FIND* 'IM??

JUST KEEP *SEARCH-ING*, BEN!

YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS OURS!

ALL I KNOW IS IF I DON'T GIT TO CLOBBER *SOME-BODY* SOON, I'LL GROW UP ALL *FRUSTRATED!*

HEY! NOW WHERE ARE YA LIGHTIN' *OUT* TO? DIDJA *SPOT* SOME-THIN'?

NO, BUT I JUST HAD A FRIGHTEN-ING *THOUGHT*..!

IT COULD BE *DISASTROUS* IF ANYONE'S BROKEN INTO OUR TOP-SECRET *SPACE-TIME CHAMBER!*

LET'S *GO!*

BUT, SUDDENLY, BEFORE THEY CAN TAKE ANOTHER STEP...

REED! WHAT'S *HAPPENING?* THE ENTIRE HALL IS BEING INUNDATED---WITH *SAND!*

JUST MY *LUCK!* I LEFT MY *PAIL 'N SHOVEL* BACK AT THE *PLAYPEN!*

THIS IS *NO* JOKING MATTER, BEN! IF IT'S WHAT I *THINK* IT IS--- WE'RE IN *DEADLY DANGER!*

RATS! YOU HOLLER *DEADLY DANGER* IF ANYONE EVEN GIVES YA A DIRTY *LOOK!*

BEN! REED IS *RIGHT!*

THE SAND IS PILING *UP*--- GROWING *HARD*..! WE-- WE'RE LIABLE TO *DROWN* IN IT!

WE'VE GOT TO *FREE* OURSELVES--BEFORE IT REACHES THE *CEILING!!*

YA MEAN--- AFTER LICKIN' *GALACTUS*--- CLOBBERIN' *KLAW*-- AN' WHUMPIN' *DOC DOOM*---WE'RE GONNA BE POLISHED OFF BY A KABOODLE OF *SAND?!!*

BEN--!

LISTEN! THERE'S ONLY *ONE* THING TO DO...!

YOU'VE GOT TO FREE *ONE ARM*--!!

HURRY! EVERYTHING *DEPENDS* ON IT!

OKAY! OKAY! I *DID* IT! BUT *NOW* WHAT??

MAKE A *FIST* AND LASH OUT TO THE *SIDE*--*NOW*, BEN--- *NOW!*

BLONK!

HOW ABOUT THAT? THE SAND'S ALL FLOWIN' INTO THE OTHER ROOM!

YOU DID IT, OLD FRIEND! WE'RE FREE!

IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW, DARLING! THE DANGER IS PAST--- FOR THE MOMENT!

REED...WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? IT'S LIKE LIVING OUT A NIGHTMARE!!

IF YA ASK ME...WE WUZ BETTER OFF WITH DOC DOOM!

THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER--!

BUT, BEFORE ANOTHER WORD CAN BE UTTERED...

THE SAND!! IT'S BEING DRAWN BACK-- WITH THE FORCE OF A TORNADO!

CAN'T KEEP MY BALANCE--- THE PULL IS TOO STRONG--!

YOUR HAND, DARLING---GIVE ME YOUR HAND!

WHO'S THE WISE-GUY?

WHO'S THE WISE-GUY?

LOOK! OVER THERE!!

LOOK WHERE THE SAND'S GOING--!

REED! NOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER! IT CAN ONLY BE ONE MAN--!

HANG THE COSTUME!! WE KNOW WHO WE'RE UP AGAINST!

BUT, I NEVER SAW THAT NUTTY COSTUME BEFORE!

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS-- RIGHT FROM THE START!

OF *COURSE* YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! AFTER ALL, THE *SANDMAN* ISN'T TOO EASY TO FORGET!

DURING YOUR *ABSENCE*, I TOOK THE ADVICE OF MY OLD PARTNER... THE *WIZARD*...

I TOOK A FAST REFRESHER COURSE IN *SCIENCE*... AND THEN DESIGNED A NEW *COSTUME* FOR MYSELF!

AFTER ALL, NOW THAT I'M THE *SUPERIOR* OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*, I MIGHT AS WELL *LOOK* THE PART!

HIS *CONFIDENCE* IS INCREDIBLE!

HE STANDS BEFORE THE GREATEST FIGHTING TEAM OF *ALL*.. ALONE AND UNARMED.. AND SPEAKS AS THOUGH HE'S IN *COMMAND*!

SO *YOU'RE* THE FINK WE'RE AFTER, HUH?

STEP ASIDE, KIDDIES!

I'M GONNA TIE THAT CORNY COSTUME INTA *KNOTS*, 'N THEN *PULVERIZE* 'IM WITH IT!

..'CAUSE IT'S **CLOBBERIN' TIME!**

BEN.. *WAIT!* REMEMBER HIS *POWER*!

DON'T WORRY, RICHARDS... I'LL NEVER LET HIM *FORGET* IT! HERE'S *LESSON ONE*...

SEE HOW *EASY* IT IS FOR THE *SANDMAN* TO FORM A GIANT *ROCK-HARD MALLET* OUT OF HIS OWN *RIGHT HAND*!

THROK!

THEN, I SIMPLY *RE-SHAPE* MY HAND INTO A POWERFUL *SHOVEL*, PUSHING THE ORANGE ORANGUTAN INTO THAT WALL OF *INSTRUMENTS!*

WHILE I EASILY *BLIND* THE OUT-CLASSED *MR. FANTASTIC* BY TOSSING A THICK CLOUD OF *SAND* INTO HIS FACE!

SPOOSH!

THP!

TRYING TO SHAKE THE *SAND* OUT OF YOUR EYES, ARE YOU?

HERE! I'LL *HELP* YOU ... AS ONLY THE *SANDMAN* CAN!

PA-THOK-A-THUK!

I'VE GOT TO TURN *INVISIBLE* AND REACH THE ELECTRIC HI-SPEED *BLOWER!*

IF I ACTIVATE IT IN TIME, IT MAY *SCATTER* SANDMAN INTO HELPLESSNESS!

THE *GIRL!* SHE'S *VANISHED!*.. TURNED *INVISIBLE!*

BUT *THAT* WON'T HELP HER!

ALL I NEED DO IS SPREAD SOME *SAND* ON THE FLOOR...

AND SEE WHERE SHE IS BY THE *FOOT-PRINTS* SHE LEAVES!

THEN, HOW *EASY* IT IS TO USE ONE OF THE MANY *BUILT-IN DEVICES* ON MY NEW COSTUME *BELT*...

DEVICES WHICH ENABLE ME TO MIX A VARIETY OF *CHEMICALS* WITH MY INVINCIBLE, ALL-POWERFUL *SAND!*

WHAT-- IS HE... GOING TO *DO*..?

A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, THE HARD-PRESSED GIRL HAS HER *ANSWER*---

HE MIXED A SLIPPERY *OIL* WITH THE SAND AT MY FEET!

CAN'T.. KEEP MY--- *BALANCE*..!

FFFT

SPLOOT!!

HAH! I *KNEW* IT! I CAN BEAT ANY... OR *ALL* OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR WHENEVER I CHOOSE!

I'M JUST SORRY THE *TORCH* ISN'T HERE... BECAUSE I'VE A FEW SURPRISES WAITING FOR *HIM*, TOO!

NO FORCE ON *EARTH* CAN STAND UP TO THE MATCHLESS POWER OF THE *SANDMAN!*

BUT THEN, BEFORE THE GLOATING ARCH-FIEND CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE, A LIGHTNING-SWIFT *FIST* SHOOTS OUT, STRETCHING ACROSS THE ROOM WITH UNERRING ACCURACY, AS THE BLUDGEONING *IMPACT* SCATTERS HIS SANDY GRAINS IN ALL DIRECTIONS --!

SPTAK!

SANDMAN--- THE BIGGEST MISTAKE YOU CAN *MAKE*.. IS TO MENACE MY *WIFE*!!

SUE, DARLING.. ARE YOU *ALL RIGHT?*

YES, DEAR! ALTHOUGH, IF YOU HADN'T *STRUCK BACK* WHEN YOU DID..!

BUT, *REED!* I JUST RE-MEMBERED.. WHERE'S *BEN??*

BEN? THAT'S *RIGHT*... HE.. OH *NO!*

HE LANDED AGAINST THE *SPACE-TIME GENERATOR LEVER!*

IF HE MAKES A *MOVE*.. IT COULD DESTROY THE *CITY!*

HOLD IT, MAN! *STAY STILL!* DON'T MOVE A *MUSCLE!*

BUT, SPEAKING OF MUSCLES, LET'S REJOIN THE MIGHTY *BLACK BOLT*, AS HE AND HIS SMALL BAND OF *INHUMANS* ARE GATHERED IN A SECRET SHELTER, SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE..*

OUR NEW HOME IS SUITABLE FOR *ALL*--- EXCEPT *ME!* THERE MUST BE MORE *WATER*---WHICH IS *LIFE* ITSELF TO *TRITON!*

PATIENCE, TRITON! BLACK BOLT HAS *PROMISED* MORE WATER!

CRYSTAL! YOU MUST ALLOW *LOCKJAW* TO ROAM!

HE IS TOO *BIG* TO BE CONFINED IN THESE SMALL QUARTERS!

MEDUSA IS RIGHT! WE ALL KNOW OF YOUR *ATTACHMENT* FOR EACH OTHER--- BUT YOU CANNOT KEEP LOCKJAW ALWAYS AT YOUR SIDE!

I *MUST*, GORGON! HE IS MY ONLY MEANS OF REACHING *JOHNNY STORM!*

AND, UNTIL JOHNNY AND I ARE *TOGETHER* AGAIN, NOTHING ELSE IN LIFE *MATTERS* TO ME!

* IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHO THE ICONOCLASTIC *INHUMANS* ARE, THEN YOU HAVEN'T BEEN READING OUR LAST ZILLION ISHES! SHAME ON YOU!...*SORROWFUL STAN.*

I KNOW YOU WISH US TO REMAIN *HIDDEN* HERE, BLACK BOLT---UNTIL WE CAN BE CERTAIN THE HUMAN RACE WON'T *ATTACK* US!

BUT, I'D RATHER FACE THE *FURY OF ALL MANKIND*, THAN SPEND ANOTHER DAY--- ANOTHER HOUR---WITHOUT THE ONE I *LOVE!*

LOCKJAW CAN BRING ME TO HIM---THROUGH HIS POWER TO SPAN THE DIMENSIONS! ALL WE NEED IS *YOUR* CONSENT!

PLEASE, BLACK BOLT.. PERMIT ME TO *LEAVE!* DON'T DENY THAT WHICH I DESIRE MOST OF *ALL!*

I *KNOW* I'LL BE SAFE! AFTER ALL---I *LOOK* LIKE ANY OTHER HUMAN!

HE NODS HIS *APPROVAL* MY SISTER! YOU *HAVE* YOUR PERMISSION! MAY *GOOD LUCK* ALSO BE YOURS!

BLACK BOLT..I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO *THANK* YOU ENOUGH!

I KNEW---I JUST *KNEW* YOU WOULDN'T FAIL ME!

SEE? LOCKJAW *UNDERSTANDS!* HE HAS *ALREADY* BEGUN TO HARNESS THE *ENERGY* HE'LL NEED!

FAREWELL, MY BELOVED FAMILY! I PRAY SOMEDAY WE'LL BE *TOGETHER* AGAIN---FOR ALWAYS!

ONE THING YOU *CAN'T* ACCUSE MERRY MARVEL OF IS NOT ENOUGH *SCENE CHANGES!* BECAUSE WE SUDDENLY SHIFT OUR ATTENTION TO THE *METRO COLLEGE STADIUM* WHERE A HARD-FOUGHT GRIDIRON CONTEST IS IN PROGRESS BETWEEN OL' *METRO* AND *E.S.U.*---

WITH ONLY TWENTY SECONDS REMAINING IN THE FIRST QUARTER, BOTH TEAMS ARE STILL *SCORELESS!*

THE BIG *MYSTERY* OF THE DAY IS--- WHO IS THE NEW, SIX-FOOT SIX *STRANGER* ON THE METRO BENCH?

AND, WHY HASN'T COACH *SAM THORPE* PUT HIM INTO THE GAME YET?

IF ONLY SOMETHING WOULD *HAPPEN*, SO I COULD GET A GOOD *SHOT* OF IT!

IT'S RUMORED THAT THE UNKNOWN MEMBER OF METRO'S BEEF TRUST IS A FULL-BLOODED *COMANCHE INDIAN*, THE SON OF--- *WAIT! HOLD EVERYTHING!* WHAT'S *THAT--??!*

IT DOESN'T MAKE *SENSE!* A *GIRL* SUDDENLY APPEARED ON THE FIELD-- OUT OF *NOWHERE!*

AND THERE'S A GIGANTIC STATUE OF A *DOG* WITH HER!

NO! IT'S *NOT* A STATUE! *LOOK!* IT'S ACTUALLY *ALIVE!*

FOR LONG, INCREDULOUS SECONDS, THE ENTIRE MULTITUDE STANDS *TRANSFIXED*---UNTIL ONE LONE FIGURE RISES TO HIS FULL *SIX-FOOT-SIX* HEIGHT, AND STEPS FORWARD---

I *KNOW* WHO SHE IS! I'VE HEARD JOHNNY *DESCRIBE* HER TO ME--- A THOUSAND TIMES!

BUT, SHE MUSTN'T *REMAIN* HERE---WHERE PEOPLE MAY SOON REALIZE WHO---OR *WHAT* SHE IS!

MISS! I'VE GOT TO *TALK* TO YOU! MY NAME IS *WYATT WINGFOOT!*

YOU'RE NOT THE ONE I'M LOOKING FOR!

I *KNOW* WHOM YOU'RE SEEKING--IT'S *JOHNNY STORM!* I'M A *FRIEND* OF HIS!

WHAT'S THIS ALL *ABOUT?* WHO *IS* SHE? HOW'D SHE *GET* HERE---AND *WHY?*

TRUST ME, COACH! I'LL EXPLAIN *LATER!*

HE *WAS* HERE! YOU MISSED HIM BY *MINUTES!*

HE *BLAZED OFF* WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS--!

NEWS? *WHAT* NEWS?

HERE---IT'S STILL BEING BROADCAST! *THIS* WILL EXPLAIN BETTER THAN *I* CAN!

---ALL TRAFFIC IS AT A STANDSTILL IN THE AREA OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS *BAXTER BUILDING*, AS THE POLICE STRUGGLE VAINLY TO HOLD BACK THE MYSTIFIED *CROWDS* WHO HAVE GATHERED TO THE SCENE OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR'S* BATTLE WITH THE DEADLY *SANDMAN--!*

THAT MEANS.. HE'S IN *DANGER!*

AND, EVEN AS CRYSTAL SPEAKS...

I HOPE I'M NOT *TOO LATE..!*

THEY MUST BE IN *BIG TROUBLE* IF THEY COULDN'T EVEN SHOOT A *SIGNAL FLARE* UP FOR ME!

LOOK! ISN'T THAT... THE *HUMAN TORCH??!*

WELL, IT SURE AIN'T *SMOKEY THE BEAR!*

THOSE GLOWING *SPECTRUM BEAMS*---THEY CAN ONLY BE CAUSED BY THE UNLEASHING OF *NEGATIVE FORCE*, FROM REED'S MACHINE!

THAT MEANS--- IT'S EVEN *WORSE* THAN I *FEARED!*

WHAT IN SAM HILL IS GOIN' *ON* UP THERE??

WHATEVER IT IS, YOU CAN BET THE *TORCH'LL* TAKE CARE OF IT!

SIS! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT'S *WRONG?*

JOHNNY!! OH, THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE *HERE!*

IT'S *BEN!* HE'S PINNED-DOWN BY THAT *SPACE-TIME* GENERATOR UNIT!

YOU'VE GOTTA BE *KIDDIN'..!*

..BEN CAN LIFT *THAT*, WITH ONE FINGER!

YOU'RE BLAMED *RIGHT* I CAN, JUNIOR!!

BUT IT'S GENERATING PURE, UNADULTERATED *NEGATIVE FORCE!!*

IF HE MAKES ONE SINGLE *MOVE*... HE CAN DESTROY THE *ENTIRE CITY!*

BUT-- HOW'D A THING LIKE THIS *HAPPEN??* WHERE'S *REED?*

OVER *HERE*, JOHNNY! I NEED YOUR *HELP... QUICK!*

IT'S THE *SANDMAN!* HE'S LOCKED HIMSELF IN THE *SPACE-TIME* CHAMBER!!

THEN PUT THAT TOY *AWAY*, BROTHER-IN-LAW---

I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO BURN MY WAY *THROUGH* TO HIM IN TIME WITH THIS ACETYLENE TORCH!

SPACE RESEARC

DANGER

---AND LET'S DO IT *MY* WAY!

EASY, LAD! WITHOUT PERFECT *CONTROL*, YOUR FLAME MIGHT *JAR* THE SPACE-TIME GENERATOR!

HAVE NO FEAR WHEN *TORCHY'S* HERE! *THERE!* I'M *THROUGH!*

NOW, ALL I HAVETA DO IS--- *REED!* THERE'S A BIG *SAND CYLINDER* HERE! HE WAS *WAITING* FOR ME! I CAN'T DODGE --:*UNHHH!*:

GET *OUT* OF IT, BOY--- *GET OUT*--- BEFORE IT SMOTHERS YOUR *FLAME!*

TUM!

TOO LATE, RICHARDS! I WAS TOO *QUICK* FOR HIM!

THIS'LL SNUFF HIM OUT LIKE A *CANDLE!*

AND NOW, I'LL FINISH *YOU* OFF, JUST AS EASY--!

DON'T *COUNT* ON IT, SANDMAN!

JOHNNY CAN *STILL* HOLD OUT IF HE'S *FREED* IN TIME!

AND I'M *JUST* THE ONE TO *DO* IT!

FTHAK!

THANKS *MUCH*, LEADER-MAN! ANOTHER COUPLE OF SECONDS WITHOUT *AIR* WOULD HAVE *FINISHED* ME!

OKAY, RICHARDS ...THEN WE'LL PLAY IT *YOUR* WAY...!

YOU'RE A GREATER PRIZE THAN THE *TORCH*, ANYHOW!

I'LL JUST LET MY SAND NODULES.. WHICH YOU SCATTERED.. *RE-FORM* THEM-SELVES--AROUND *YOU!*

AND NOW... WHILE YOU'RE *HELPLESS..!*

KOP!

MY FLAME'LL COME *BACK* IN A MINUTE... I'LL *GET* 'IM FOR THAT, REED!

NO SWEAT, JOHNNY... SANDMAN JUST MADE HIS BIGGEST *MISTAKE--!*

HE FORGOT THAT *MR. FANTASTIC* IS *NEVER* HELPLESS!

ALL I NEED DO IS *THIN* MYSELF THROUGH THE SAND, AND THEN--!

AND THEN YOU FALL INTO MY *NEXT* TRAP---LIKE *THIS!*

EVEN *YOU* CAN'T BREAK OUT OF MY ROCK-HARD *SAND-VISE GRIP!*

WHUP!

THAT *SINKS* IT!

NOTHING'LL SAVE YOU FROM ME *NOW!*

FLAME ON!

MAYBE I CAN'T *DODGE* YOUR FIERY ATTACK... BUT I'VE *ANOTHER* WAY OUT...!

I DIDN'T ADD THESE *CONTROL BUTTONS* TO MY NEW COSTUME JUST FOR *SHOW!*

CLICK!

KNOWING I'D HAVE TO FACE YOUR *FLAMING ATTACK* SOONER OR LATER, THE *WIZARD* GAVE ME THE PERFECT MEANS TO *STOP* YOU..!

BY RELEASING A QUANTITY OF *LIQUID NITROGEN*, MY SANDY MOLECULES IMMEDIATELY *FREEZE!*

THEN, AS SOON AS YOUR NOW-USELESS *FLAME* CONTACTS ME, THE CHEMICAL COMBINATION GIVES OFF A POWERFUL, *POISONOUS VAPOR..!*

OR, PERHAPS YOU'VE ALREADY *NOTICED* IT?!!

REED! MY FLAME'S *OUT* AGAIN... FUMES FILLING THE ROOM..!

CAN'T.. CATCH MY... BREATH...

THE *SAND-MAN*.. ISN'T AFFECTED... BUT *WE*... HAVE TO *DO* SOMETHING... OR.. IT'S ALL *OVER*..!

SUE... YOU AND JOHNNY... GRAB ONE OF THE *PIPES* NEARBY..!

I'VE GOT TO OPEN THE DOOR.. TO.. THE *NEGATIVE ZONE*..!

HOLD *ON*... FOR DEAR LIFE! DON'T LET GO... FOR *ANYTHING*..!

BUT... YOU ALWAYS *WARNED* US.. TOLD US.. *NEVER* TO OPEN IT..!

BUT NOW... IT'S OUR *ONLY CHANCE*..!

HANG ON! ...HERE *GOES*..!

A MICRO-SECOND LATER, THE ENTIRE CHAMBER IS FILLED WITH A BLINDING, UNEARTHLY *GREEN LIGHT*... AS AN UNIMAGINABLY POWERFUL *SUCTION* CAUSES THE DEADLY GAS...AND EVERYTHING *ELSE* WITHIN RANGE..TO HURTLE TOWARDS THE *CENTER* OF THE LIGHT SOURCE ...!

HOLD ON, SUE! DON'T LET GO IF YOU VALUE YOUR *LIFE! JOHNNY*.. YOU *TOO*... GRAB A STEEL *PIPE* FOR SUPPORT... *MOVE*, BOY!!

I'M *TRYING*.. BUT.. THE PRESSURE... TOO *STRONG*.. CAN'T *SEE*...

TO YOUR *LEFT*... REACH OUT.. *REACH*, *JOHNNY*..!

I *GOT* IT! IT'S *HOLDING* ME! BUT.. EVERYTHING *ELSE*... FLYING PAST...HOW.. DO WE... *STOP* IT..?

WE'VE *UNLEASHED* SOMETHING... MUCH MORE *DANGEROUS*... THAN THE *SANDMAN*..!

AND, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM... A DAZED, UNCOMPREHENDING FIGURE FEELS THE SEETHING SENSATION OF BLIND *PANIC* WELLING WITHIN HIM...

I NEVER BARGAINED FOR ANYTHING... LIKE *THIS!*

IT'S LIKE... THE END OF THE *WORLD!*

IT'S STARTING TO PULL *ME*... TOWARDS THE OPEN DOOR... INTO...*WHAT?*

I MADE MY *FEET*... LIKE *SANDY ANCHORS*... BUT THEY CAN'T *HOLD* ME... MUCH *LONGER*..!

THE FORCE IS GETTING *STRONGER*... PULLING TOO *HARD*... CAN'T *FIGHT* IT!

BUT IT WON'T *GET* ME...!

THERE'S STILL *ONE* WAY OUT...!

THEN, FORGETTING HIS CRUCIAL BATTLE WITH THE *FF*... FORGETTING HOW CLOSE HE HAD SEEMED TO ULTIMATE VICTORY... FORGETTING *EVERYTHING* SAVE THE MENACE THAT LOOMS AHEAD... SANDMAN *LEAPS*...

KLASH!

THE *WINDOW*.. I *MADE* IT!

WITH THE WINDOW BROKEN OPEN, THE DEADLY FUMES ARE INSTANTLY *DISSIPATED*... BUT, A FAR GRAVER.. FAR *DEADLIER* FATE SUDDENLY BECKONS TO THE ONE MAN WHO HAD RISKED *EVERYTHING* TO SAVE HIS FELLOWS...

THE *SPACE-TIME CHAMBER*.. IT'S DRAWING ME *IN!*...THE *DOOR*-- CLOSING *BEHIND* ME--!

THE *SUCTION* IS TOO GREAT... CAN'T *FIGHT* IT!! ONCE INSIDE... THERE'S *NO WAY BACK!*

I'VE HIT THE *DIMENSION BARRIER*... I'M PLUNGING *THROUGH!*

I'LL BE *TRAPPED*.. IN A MATTER OF SECONDS.. WITHIN *NEGATIVE SPACE!*

AND THEN, LIKE A HELPLESS PARTICIPANT IN SOME DEMONIACAL *NIGHTMARE*, THE DOOMED REED RICHARDS PLUNGES DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO AN INDESCRIBABLE WORLD WHERE STRANGE, MADDENINGLY-ALIEN SHAPES STRETCH ENDLESSLY ON...TOWARDS AN UNKNOWN *INFINITY*...!

I'VE... ENTERED THE.. *NEGATIVE ZONE!*

NOTHING... CAN SAVE ME.. NOW!

BUT.. AT LEAST MY SACRIFICE... WON'T HAVE BEEN... IN *VAIN*...!

SUE...AND THE OTHERS.. HAVE BEEN SAVED... FROM THE *SANDMAN!*

AS FOR *ME*...I'LL SOON LEARN THE *ANSWER*... TO THE GREATEST MYSTERY ...OF ALL...

...THE *FINAL* ANSWER!

MEANWHILE, SECONDS AFTER THE AUTOMATIC SAFETY DOORS HAVE THUNDERED *SHUT* BEHIND THE NOW-VANISHED MR. FANTASTIC...

I DUNNO WHAT *HAPPENED*, BUT IT SHUT OFF THE *CURRENT* LONG ENUFF FOR ME TO GIT *LOOSE!*

HE'S *GONE*, BEN!

REED MANAGED TO *SAVE* US FROM... *OHHH!*

REED!! HE'S *GONE!!*

NOW..WHERE'S THE *SAND-MAN??* WHERE *IS* HE??

THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!* THE DOORS HAD *OPENED!* AND THEN..!

NO! OH... *NO!*

IF THE *SANDMAN* THINKS HE'S GONNA GIT AWAY FROM *US* HE BETTER... *HEY!* WHAT *GIVES??*

REED! MY *DARLING!* NO! NOOOOOOOOOO

SUE! WHAT... WHAT *IS* IT??

BEN! *LOOK* AT HER.. SHE..SHE'S *HYSTERICAL!*

UNABLE TO SPEAK... UNWILLING TO BELIEVE THE TRAGIC EVIDENCE OF HER SENSES... THE TORTURED GIRL CAN ONLY *POINT*... POINT TO THE FATEFUL *SIGHT* UPON THE AUTOMATICALLY ACTIVATED *SPACE-TIME SCREEN*...

SHE'S POINTING TO THE SCR... *BEN! BEN!* THERE..IN THE *CENTER*.. IT'S *REED!*

HE MUST'A GOT *PULLED IN*... BY THE *SUCTION!*

BEN... *HELP ME!* HELP ME *OPEN* THE CHAMBER! WE HAVE TO *SAVE* HIM!

DO YA THINK YOU GOTTA *TELL* ME? IF THERE WUZ EVEN A *CHANCE*... WOULDN'T I *BE* THERE ALREADY??

I BEEN *WORKING* WITH HIM ON THAT THING... HE *SPEEDED* IT UP... NO MATTER *WHAT* WE DO NOW...

..THERE'S *NO* WAY TO *REACH* 'IM!

IF ONLY HE HAD TIME TO GRAB A *ROPE*... OR SOMETHIN' WE COULD'A *HELD ONTO!*

BUT... IF WE OPEN THAT DOOR *NOW*... ALL THAT'LL HAPPEN IS... WE'LL *ALL* BE PULLED IN...!

BEN! YOU SOUND LIKE.. IT'S *HOPE-LESS!*

...'N MEBBE THAT AIN'T SUCH A BAD IDEA! WHAT GOOD ARE THE *THREE* OF US.. WITH-, OUT.. OL' *STRETCHO..?*

FACE IT, WILLYA..?

HE'LL BE HITTIN' THE *EXPLOSIVE ZONE* ANY MINUTE NOW... AND THERE'S NO WAY TO *REACH* 'IM... NO WAY TO *STOP* 'IM!

WHAT'S THE USE'A *KIDDIN'* OUR-SELVES?? WE *ALL* KNOW... WHAT I'M TRYIN' TA SAY..!

HE'S... *GONE!*

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

"...AND ONE SHALL SAVE HIM!"

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

12¢ IND. | 62 MAY

THE GRIEVING FF LEARN: TO ABANDON HOPE IS TO ABANDON LIFE!

22

"...AND ONE SHALL SAVE HIM!"

MAYBE WE CAN'T *HELP* REED, BUT WE CAN STILL *CONTACT* HIM!

I JUST REMEMBERED THIS *TRANS-BARRIER PHONE* HE WUZ WORKIN' ON...TO REACH INTA THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!*

REED! THIS IS *BEN!* CAN YA *HEAR* ME, MAN? IT'S *BEN*... I'M *CALLIN'* YA!

IN A DESPERATE EFFORT TO SAVE SUE, BEN, AND JOHNNY FROM THE *SANDMAN'S* MURDEROUS ATTACK, REED RICHARDS HURLED OPEN THE FATEFUL *DOOR* LEADING TO THE DREADED *NEGATIVE ZONE!* HIS DARING ACTION ROUTED THEIR ENEMY, BUT *REED* HIMSELF WAS CAUGHT IN THE SUDDEN SURGE OF UNLEASHED *FORCE*...AND CARRIED AWAY... BEYOND ANY HOPE OF RESCUE..!

CAN YOU *DO* IT, BEN? CAN YOU REALLY GET *THROUGH* TO HIM?

CONTRIVED AND CRAFTED BY THE CURIOUSLY CREATIVE, CATASTROPHICALLY COMPELLING COLLABORATION OF:

STAN LEE *and* JACK KIRBY

INKING: JOE SINNOTT || *LETTERING:* SAM ROSEN

QUIET, BLAST IT!! I'M TRYIN' TO HEAR SOMETHIN'!!

WAIT! HE'S COMIN' THROUGH..! I'M GETTIN' 'IM!!

...BEN..

YOU GOT HIM! THAT'S HIS VOICE! LEMME HAVE IT, BEN...LET ME TALK TO HIM--!

HOLD IT, KID... HOLD IT!

...DON'T DO IT, BEN!...DON'T USE PHONE!... GIVE UP IDEA... NO CHANCE.. OF RESCUE.. NO CHANCE...

BUT, THERE MUST BE SOMETHIN' WE CAN DO!! USE YER HEAD, PAL.. THINK... THINK OF SOMETHIN ANYTHING..!

LISTEN, BEN... AND LISTEN CLOSE...

SAY THE WORD, STRETCH--JUST TELL ME..WHATEVER IT IS..I'LL DO IT..WE'LL ALL DO IT! WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP..!

I'M CAUGHT IN A DEBRIS BELT... BEING DRAWN INEXORABLY TOWARD THE EXPLODING AREA AROUND EARTH!! THERE'S--NO WAY TO CHECK MY SPEED...

IT WOULD BE AS IMPOSSIBLE AS TRYING TO STOP GRAVITY ITSELF..!

I CAN HEAR YOU...AND SPEAK TO YOU..VIA THE COMMUNICATOR ON MY WRIST... BUT, IT'S HOPELESS...I'M DONE FOR!

SPEED IS INCREASING.. ALMOST OUT OF COMMUNICATION RANGE..!

IT'S GOODBYE, OLD FRIEND..YOU.. AND JOHNNY... WERE THE GREATEST...

AND SUE... TAKE CARE OF HER...BOTH OF YOU..LOOK AFTER HER.. ALWAYS...

TELL HER...HOW MUCH...I LOVED HER...TELL HER.. I'LL.. ALWAYS LOVE HER...

HIS *VOICE* DIED OUT... CAN'T *HEAR* ANY MORE!! THAT MEANS... HE'S OUT OF *RANGE!!*

IT *CAN'T* END THIS WAY... IT *MUSTN'T!!* *REED*... *REED*... MY DARLING... COME BACK... COME BACK..!

DON'T, SUSIE.. *DON'T!* HOLD ON, KID...! REED WOULDN'T *WANT* IT... LIKE THIS..!

NOW I KNOW... WHY HE TOLD ME... NOT TO USE THE PHONE!

HE *KNEW* WE COULDN'T *HELP* 'IM... AN' HE KNEW.. WHAT HEARIN' HIS *VOICE*... WOULD *DO* TO YOU..!

BUT... HOW CAN WE *LEAVE* HIM THIS WAY?? HOW CAN WE *DESERT* HIM... WHEN HE NEEDS US *MOST??* WE'RE *LOSING* HIM... FOREVER... AND DOING *NOTHING*... *NOTHING*..!!

I'D GIVE UP MY *LIFE*... IN A *MINUTE*, KID... I'D TAKE ANYTHING THAT ANYONE COULD DISH OUT... IF IT WOULD *HELP* 'IM.. BUT.. THERE AIN'T NO WAY..!

NO!! THERE'S *ALWAYS* A WAY! REED *HIMSELF* USED TO *TELL* US THAT..!!

THEN, EVEN AS SUE'S TREMULOUS CRY STILL STINGS THE GRIEVING SOULS OF BEN AND JOHNNY, A STRANGE ETHEREAL *GLOW* FILLS THE TRAGEDY-HAUNTED CHAMBER... AS, FROM ITS VORTEX, AN ECSTATIC *CALL* RINGS OUT...

JOHNNY! I *KNEW* I'D FIND YOU SOME-DAY! I *KNEW* LOCK-JAW WOULD BRING ME TO YOUR SIDE!

JOHNNY!! DON'T YOU *HEAR* ME? IT'S *CRYSTAL!* WE'RE *TOGETHER* AGAIN...: AT *LAST!*

IT MUST BE THE *STRAIN*... THE UNRELIEVED *SHOCK!!* NOW, I'M *HEARING* THINGS! MY *MIND* IS BEGINNING TO *FAIL* ME! IT *CAN'T* BE... AND YET...

HER *VOICE*... I'D KNOW IT *ANYWHERE!!* SHE.. SHE *IS* HERE!

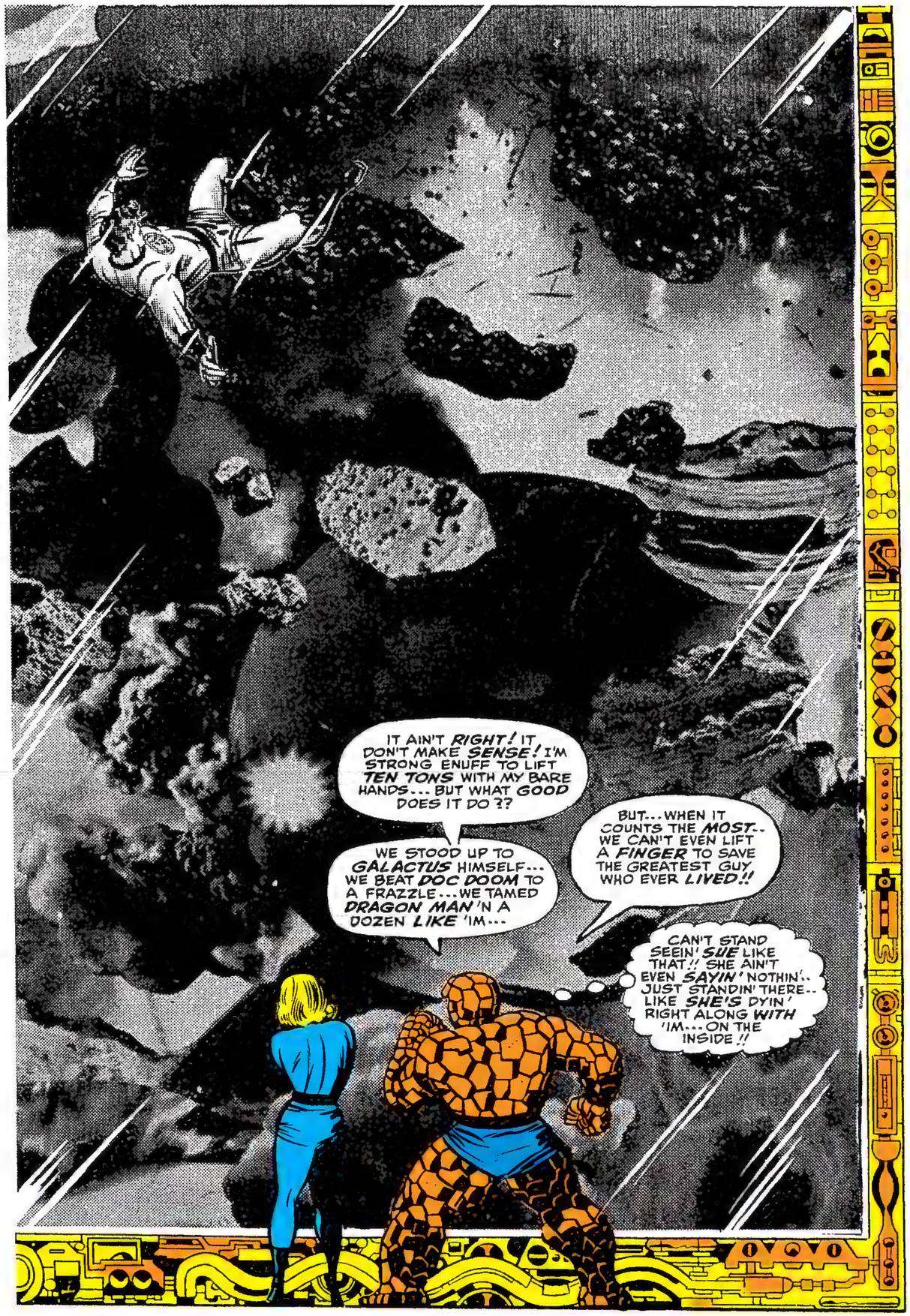
IT WAS WHAT I *WANTED*... MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD... BUT NOT *NOW*... NOT.. LIKE *THIS*..!

JOHNNY!! DON'T YOU... DON'T YOU *CARE??* DO I... NO LONGER *MEAN* ANYTHING.. TO YOU??

DON'T *SAY* IT, CRYS!! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!! YOU DON'T... KNOW WHAT'S *HAPPENED*..!

THEN *TELL* ME, MY DEAREST!! WHATEVER IS WRONG... I WANT TO KNOW.. I WANT TO *HELP*..!

LOOK!! LOOK THROUGH THE SCANNER!! THAT FIGURE THERE... PLUNGING THROUGH THE NEGATIVE ZONE... SEE IT? THERE... GETTING SMALLER AND SMALLER.. FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY FROM US... IT'S REED!! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?? IT'S REED!!
HE'S PLUMMETING TO HIS DEATH.. TOWARDS EARTH'S EXPLOSIVE BELT...
AND, WITH ALL OUR POWERS... THERE'S NO WAY FOR US TO SAVE HIM! ALL WE CAN DO.. IS STAND HELPLESSLY BY... AND WATCH..!
I... DIDN'T KNOW!!! I NEVER SUSPECTED..!


IT AIN'T RIGHT! IT DON'T MAKE SENSE! I'M STRONG ENUFF TO LIFT TEN TONS WITH MY BARE HANDS... BUT WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO??
WE STOOD UP TO GALACTUS HIMSELF... WE BEAT DOC DOOM TO A FRAZZLE... WE TAMED DRAGON MAN 'N A DOZEN LIKE 'IM...
BUT... WHEN IT COUNTS THE MOST.. WE CAN'T EVEN LIFT A FINGER TO SAVE THE GREATEST GUY WHO EVER LIVED!!
CAN'T STAND SEEIN' SUE LIKE THAT!! SHE AIN'T EVEN SAYIN' NOTHIN'.. JUST STANDIN' THERE.. LIKE SHE'S DYIN' RIGHT ALONG WITH 'IM... ON THE INSIDE!!

I THINK I *UNDERSTAND* NOW!! *MR. FANTASTIC*--YOUR LEADER--IS TRAPPED IN SOMETHING YOU CALL A *NEGATIVE ZONE*---AND IS BEING DRAWN CLOSER AND CLOSER TO AN AREA IN WHICH HE CANNOT HOPE TO *SURVIVE!*

HELP? WADDAYA *TALKIN'* ABOUT? WHAT IN BLAZES CAN *YOU* DO THAT THE THREE OF *US* CAN'T??

IF ONLY THERE WAS SOME WAY I COULD HARNESS MY *FLAME* AND ---WHA--?

STOP IT!! STOP IT!! HOW CAN YOU *SPEAK* OF IT SO CALMLY---AS THOUGH IT'S JUST A *STORY*--- AS THOUGH IT--IT ISN'T REALLY *HAPPENING*-- TO MY *HUSBAND*--- TO THE MAN I *LOVE*---!

FORGIVE ME, MRS. RICHARDS...I AM NOT UNFEELING! I CAN ONLY *HELP* IF I AM IN FULL POSSESSION OF THE *FACTS!*

PERHAPS *I* CAN DO *NOTHING*--- BUT THERE ARE *OTHERS*--- REMEMBER, THE *INHUMANS* HAVE POWER UNLIKE ANY OTHER LIVING BEINGS!

THE *INHUMANS!!* ARE THE *OTHERS* FREE, TOO??

CRYS!! IS *BLACK BOLT* WITH YOU? AND *GORGON*--- AND *KARNAK*-- AND THE *OTHERS*??

NO---THEY'RE FAR AWAY--OVER THE *OCEAN!*

THEN WHAT *GOOD* CAN THEY DO? REED'S ONLY GOT A FEW MINUTES *LEFT!!*

BUT--- DON'T YOU *SEE?* TIME AND DISTANCE ARE COMPLETELY *MEANING-LESS*--!

LOCKJAW'S POWER OF INTER-DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL IS *INSTANTANEOUS!*

BACK, LOCKJAW--- TAKE ME BACK TO *BLACK BOLT!!*

CRYS--WAIT! WHAT WILL YOU---?

I CANNOT EX-PLAIN! TRUST ME, JOHNNY!

THEY'RE FADIN' *AWAY* AGAIN!

AND, AT THAT SPLIT-SECOND, WITHIN THE AWESOME *NEGATIVE ZONE* ITSELF, AN EVENT OCCURS WHICH IS WITNESSED BY *NONE*--- SAVE *OURSELVES*---

WE HAVE ONLY *SECONDS* IN WHICH TO *RID* OURSELVES OF OUR DEADLY CARGO!

HE IS FAR TOO *DANGEROUS* TO REMAIN AT LARGE UPON OUR OWN PLANET!

AND YET, SO *POWERFUL* IS HE, THAT WE HAVE NOT THE MEANS TO *SLAY* HIM!

THEREFORE, OUR ONLY SOLUTION IS TO *EXILE* HIM---HERE IN THE *DEBRIS BELT!!*

IF WE CAN *DO* IT WITHOUT BEING *DESTROYED* OURSELVES!

WE HAVE *REACHED* OUR DESTINATION !!

THE *SPACE BOULDERS* WHICH SURROUND US ARE BEING INEXORABLY DRAWN TO THEIR FINAL *ANNIHILATION!*

THE PRISONER MUST BE *EJECTED* FROM THE SHIP SO THAT HE MAY *JOIN* THEM··· BEFORE THE *SEDATIVE*, WHICH KEEPS HIM MOTIONLESS, CAN BEGIN TO WEAR OFF!!

AND BEFORE WE *OURSELVES* ARE CAUGHT IN THE IRRESISTIBLE SUCTION···AND UNABLE TO *RETURN!*

HE IS CORRECTLY POSITIONED UPON OUR *MAGNA-CRANE*···SAFELY ENCASED WITHIN HIS *ADHESION SUIT!*

SET THE CONTROLS FOR *INSTANT REVERSE* AS I PROPEL HIM TOWARDS THE NEAREST FLYING BOULDER!

A SCANT SECOND LATER, THE SILENT FIGURE ADHERES TO THE SIDE OF A SPEEDING CHUNK OF SPACE DEBRIS, AS THE STRANGE, ROARING CRAFT ZOOMS BACK FROM WHENCE IT HAD COME··!

BUT THEN, AN UNPREDICTABLE *FATE* FRIVOLOUSLY ARRANGES A MOST FATEFUL AND DRAMATIC *COINCIDENCE*···

A ROCKET-POWERED *SPACE-CRAFT*··· HERE IN THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!*

THAT MEANS···EVEN IN *THIS* MAD, NIGHTMARISH UNIVERSE···SOME FORM OF *INTELLIGENT LIFE* MUST EXIST!

IF ONLY I HAD *KNOWN*··· IF I COULD HAVE PREPARED SOME *SIGNAL*--!

BUT, IT'S *TOO LATE!* AT THE *SPEED* THEY'RE TRAVELLING··· I'M NO MORE THAN A FLEETING *BLUR* TO THEM!

REMEMBER THE *COINCIDENCE* WE SPOKE OF? IN TRUTH, IT IS FAR *GREATER*---FAR MORE *MOMENTOUS* THAN ANY MIGHT SUSPECT! FOR, ALTHOUGH COMPLETELY *UNAWARE* OF ANOTHER PRESENCE, *REED RICHARDS* CLINGS FATEFULLY TO THE *SELFSAME* BOULDER UPON WHICH THE UNKNOWN MENACE NOW SILENTLY ADHERES..!

THERE IS SO MUCH YET TO LEARN...SO MUCH TO SEE, AND MARVEL AT...!

WHAT A PITY IT ALL MUST *END* SO SOON---BEFORE I HAVE A CHANCE TO UNRAVEL THE MYRIAD *MYSTERIES* OF THIS STRANGE, UNCANNY UNIVERSE!

BUT, THERE WILL BE *OTHERS*--- THOSE WHO COME *AFTER* ME---AND *THEY* WILL UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF THE COSMOS---ONE BY ONE---

FOR, THE *MIND* OF MAN IS THE GREATEST KEY IN THE WORLD---THE KEY WHICH MAY ONE DAY OPEN THE DOOR TO--- *IMMORTALITY!!*

AND *EACH* OF US, IN HIS OWN WAY, DOES WHAT HE CAN FOR THOSE WHO WILL *FOLLOW!*

THAT IS THE ONLY *TRUE LEGACY* WE CAN LEAVE TO THOSE WE LOVE---THAT WE HAVE MADE THE WORLD A LITTLE *BETTER* THAN WE FOUND IT!

BUT, WE NOW MUST *LEAVE* THE BROODING, ILL-STARRED LEADER OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HERO TEAM, AS WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO A SMALL *ISLAND*, OFF THE COAST OF EUROPE WHERE AN ASTONISHING TABLEAU IS ABOUT TO TRANSPIRE ...

OUR *NUCLEAR SUB* HAS SLIPPED THROUGH THE *NATO* RADAR NET JUST AS WE PLANNED!

FASTER! FASTER! ONCE OUR *ATOMIC NULLIFIER* IS IN POSITION, THIS NOW-DESERTED ISLAND WILL BE *OURS!*

THEN, WITH A BASE SUCH AS *THIS*... SO CLOSE TO THE *MAINLAND*... IT IS *WE* WHO SHALL DICTATE TERMS TO THE WESTERN ALLIANCE!

CAREFUL, YOU CLUMSY OAF!! THE *RAY CANNON* YOU ARE PUSHING MAY CHANGE THE BALANCE OF POWER ON THIS ENTIRE *PLANET!*

IT IS ALMOST *TOO* EASY! THERE IS NOT ANOTHER LIVING BEING FOR *MILES* WHO SUSPECTS OUR PRESENCE HERE!

THUMP!

THUMM!

POSITION THE CANNON UPON THE *HIGHEST PEAK!*

SET ALL CONTROLS FOR *INSTANT ACTIVATION!* WE OPEN FIRE *AT ONCE!*

WE WILL RING THIS ISLE WITH AN *ATOMIC CURTAIN* THAT *NOTHING* CAN PENETRATE!

LOOK! OVER *THERE!*... WHAT IS *THAT?*

SILENCE, FOOL! THIS IS NO TIME FOR *OBSERVATION TESTS!*

BUT--IT IS A *MAN*-- FLYING ... TOWARDS THE *CANNON!*

ZZZZZZZZZZZZ

IT IS NOT *POSSIBLE!* HE SOARS ... LIKE A *BIRD!* HE IS *POINTING* ... AT THE CANNON--!

A FUSILLADE OF *ELECTRONS* ISSUES FROM HIS FINGERTIPS!! NO! *NO!*

HE HAS *DECIMATED* THE GREATEST WEAPON IN OUR ARSENAL!

KA-TOOM!

HELP!! HE *SEIZES* US ... AS THOUGH WE ARE *WEIGHTLESS!!* HE CARRIES US *OFF*--!!

KRAK!

HE GLIDES *SILENTLY* ... EFFORTLESSLY ... UNDER HIS OWN POWER!

WHAT--WHAT *IS* HE?? WHAT *MADNESS* IS THIS?

KRAK!

BUT, BEFORE THE STUNNED INVADERS CAN RECOVER FROM THE SHOCK OF *BLACK BOLT'S* LIGHTNING ATTACK, *ANOTHER* OF THE UNCANNY *INHUMANS* ENTERS THE FRAY---AS ONLY *GORGON* CAN---!

YOU *DARE* ATTEMPT TO OCCUPY THE ISLE UPON WHICH *WE* HAVE TAKEN REFUGE??

FOR *THAT* YOU SHALL *PAY*--- AND PAY MOST *DEARLY!*

KOOM!

SO! THERE ARE THOSE WHO *ESCAPED* THE FURY OF GORGON'S THUNDEROUS *KICK!*

NO MATTER! I HAVE ONLY TO RAISE MY MIGHTY LEG *ONCE MORE--!*

THAT WILL NOT BE *NECESSARY!* SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT *MEDUSA* IS HERE!

WHUMP!

THE ISLAND IS *ACCURSED!*

NO MATTER *WHO* THEY ARE---OR *WHAT* THEY ARE-- I CAN'T *MISS* THEM AT SUCH CLOSE RANGE!!

HOW *WRONG* YOU ARE! I SHALL NOT GIVE YOU THE CHANCE YOU NEED!

ONE MAN--- ALONE--UNARMED!! YOU MUST BE INSANE!

NO! I AM *NOT* INSANE---!

I AM--- *KARNAK!!*

FLAK!

GET HIM... BEFORE HE CAN STRIKE AGAIN!

HE CANNOT STOP US ALL!

SO! ONCE MORE YOU DARE TO PIT YOURSELVES AGAINST THE POWER OF KARNAK!

YOU ARE ONE.. ALONE... WHILE WE ARE THREE... FULLY ARMED!

THUS, WE DARE ANYTHING!

USING THE MOST DELICATE, BARELY PERCEPTIBLE WRIST MOTION, THE CONFIDENT INHUMAN EXECUTES AN INTRICATE MANEUVER WITH EACH HAND AS HE BUTTS HIS THIRD FOE SENSELESS...!

THWUMP!

WHUZZ!

THIT!

SPAK!

ZAP!

THEN, IN LESS TIME THAN IT TAKES TO READ THESE IMPERISHABLE WORDS...

WE THOUGHT THIS ISLE WOULD AFFORD US THE PRIVACY WE CRAVE!

IT APPEARS WE WERE MISTAKEN!

PERHAPS IT WAS ALL TO THE GOOD! AFTER WHAT HAS JUST TRANSPIRED, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY WILL INTRUDE UPON US AGAIN!

BLACK BOLT HAS NODDED ASSENT! HE AGREES WITH GORGON'S WORDS!

BUT NOW, WHAT DO WE DO WITH THOSE WE HAVE OVERCOME?

OF COURSE! ALL YOU NEED DO IS CREATE AN ELECTRON FIELD TO CONTAIN THEM IN SAFETY!

YES... A FIELD WHICH BLACK BOLT WILL CAUSE TO AUTOMATICALLY VANISH WHEN WE ARE READY TO SEND THEM TO THE MAINLAND!

BUT, OUR TASK IS NOT YET COMPLETED!

AND, WHAT OF TRITON! THERE IS NO SIGN OF HIM! HE ALONE IS MISSING!

THE ENEMY SUB-MARINE REMAINS OFF-SHORE... WHERE IT STILL MAY MENACE US!

EVEN AS *MEDUSA* SPEAKS, THE WATER-BREATHING INHUMAN SILENTLY EXAMINES THE ARMORED HULL OF THE GRIM, GREY *SUB* WHICH HAS MISSILES ENOUGH TO *ATOMIZE* THE NEARBY ISLE..!

AND THEN, AT LAST, HE SEEKS... AND *FINDS* WHAT HE SEEKS... THE *HEART* OF THE VESSEL...THE VITAL *REACTOR ROOM*..!

THOUGH NOT AS POWERFUL AS THE REGAL *BLACK BOLT* HIMSELF, THE ACQUATIC INHUMAN IS ABLE TO GENERATE ENORMOUS *PRESSURE* WITHIN HIS OWN BODY... PRESSURE WHICH ENABLES HIM TO SURVIVE AT THE VERY *DEPTHS* OF THE SWIRLING SEA...

...PRESSURE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THE *STRENGTH* HE NEEDS TO FLOOD THE ENTIRE REACTOR ROOM WITH ONE TITANIC BLOW --!

SHOOM!

OUR INVASION HAS *FAILED!* WE MUST *DESTROY* THE ISLAND! *FIRE ALL MISSILES!*

THE SHIP IS *SETTLING!!* THE REACTOR ROOM IS *FLOODED!* WE ARE HELPLESSLY *TRAPPED!*

ONLY BY RADIOING TO *NATO* FOR AID CAN WE BE SAVED! IT..IT IS *UNTHINK-ABLE!!*

ANOTHER FEW SECONDS AND THE ISLAND WOULD HAVE CEASED TO *EXIST!*

BUT *NOW*...ALL IS *LOST!*

AND SO...

THE MOMENT THE SUB *VANISHED*, WE KNEW WHERE YOU *WERE*, TRITON!

I SEE THE FIGHTING HAS *ENDED!* IT IS GOOD!

BUT, A *NEW* MATTER HAS ARISEN! *CRYSTAL* HAS RETURNED---SHE SEEKS OUR *AID!*

THERE IS NOT A *SECOND* TO LOSE! I WILL EXPLAIN---

SHE IS *ONE* OF US! WITH *BLACK BOLT'S* ASSENT, WE WILL DO WHAT WE CAN!

SPEAK, THEN, CRYSTAL! BLACK BOLT ASSUMES THE STANCE OF *FULL ATTENTION!*

QUICKLY, EARNESTLY, WITHOUT WASTING A HEARTBEAT OR A WORD, THE LOVELY SISTER OF *MEDUSA* DESCRIBES THE DEADLY PREDICAMENT OF *REED RICHARDS!* AND THEN---

HE HAS *FOUGHT* FOR US---*AIDED* US IN THE PAST... WE CANNOT FAIL HIM *NOW!*

...UNLESS HELP REACHES HIM WITHIN *MINUTES*, THE LEADER OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* WILL PERISH!

BLACK BOLT HAS *NODDED!* REED RICHARDS WILL BE *SAVED!*

ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR OUR MONARCH TO SELECT THE ONE OF US WHO IS BEST *QUALIFIED*, FOR THE TASK!

QUICKLY, BLACK BOLT!! I BEG OF YOU---MAKE YOUR CHOICE *QUICKLY!*

INSTANTLY, A PAIR OF BLAZING, UNBLINKING EYES SCAN THE SMALL ASSEMBLAGE---SILENTLY DELIBERATING, WEIGHING, DECIDING---UNTIL...

HE RESTS HIS GLANCE UPON *ONE!!* THE DECISION IS *MADE!* BLACK BOLT HAS *CHOSEN!*

I--THOUGHT IT WOULD BE--ONE OF THE *OTHERS*--!

NO MATTER THE DANGER! BLACK BOLT *COMMANDS!* I STAND *READY!*

BUT, NOW THAT I *THINK* OF IT-- THE CHOICE IS A *WISE* ONE!

OF *COURSE!* NO ONE *ELSE* COULD SERVE, AS WELL!

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE PENTHOUSE HEADQUARTERS ATOP THE WORLD-FAMOUS *BAXTER BUILDING* ---

THEM BOULDERS ARE GETTIN' CLOSER'N CLOSER TO THE *DISINTEGRATIN'* AREA!!

WHY DON'T THAT GAL GIT *BACK* HERE?? WHERE *IS* SHE?? WE'RE RUNNIN' OUTTA *TIME!!*

THE OTHERS PROBABLY *TOLD* HER... HOW *HOPE-LESS*...IT IS..!

IT LOOKS LIKE WE CAN REACH OUT 'N *TOUCH* 'IM... AND YET..HE'S *WORSE OFF* THAN IF HE WUZ CALLIN' FOR HELP ON THE *MOON!!*

I CAN'T *TAKE* IT NO MORE!! CAN'T STAND HERE JUST *WATCHIN'* ...DOIN' *NOTHIN'!..!!*

IF MY BUDDY'S GOTTA *DIE*... IF THERE'S NOTHIN' WE CAN *DO* ABOUT IT... AT LEAST I DON'T HAVETA *WATCH* IT!!

KRRAK!

I GOTTA DO *SOMETHING*.. *ANYTHING*... EVEN IF IT'S JUST TEARIN' THIS WHOLE BLASTED *BUILDING* APART!

BEN..DON'T!! YOU'RE RIPPING OUT THE WHOLE *WALL SCANNER!!* ---*BEN!*

IT'S NO USE... HE'S TOO FAR *GONE*.. I CAN'T *STOP* HIM!

AND, WHAT'S THE *DIFF*? WHAT *GOOD* WOULD IT DO...IF I *COULD?*

BUT THEN, JUST WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS THE DARKEST... THE MOST TRAGICALLY HOPELESS...

CRYSTAL! YOU'RE BACK!

ARE WE... STILL IN TIME?

WE DON'T KNOW! THE VIEW-SCREEN IS SHATTERED!

BUT, WHO IS THAT? WHOM HAVE YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU?

THE ONE PERSON WHO HAS THE POWER TO HELP..!

IT IS TRITON-- THE WATER-BREATHING AQUATIC INHUMAN!

BUT ..WHY HIM?

DEEPEST SPACE... WHETHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE... IS LIKE A VAST, ENDLESS OCEAN!!

ONLY TRITON IS ABLE TO MANEUVER UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS!

ONLY I HAVE A CHANCE OF FINDING REED RICHARDS IN THE LIMITLESS REACHES OF THE UNKNOWN!

IF YA CAN MOVE AS GOOD AS YA MAKE SPEECHES, REED'S AS GOOD AS SAVED!

BEN! OPEN THE ENTRANCE TO THE SPACE-TIME CHAMBER-- SLOWLY THIS TIME... ONE SAFETY CHAMBER AFTER THE OTHER!

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME, LADY, YOU DON'T HAVETA TELL ME TWICE!

GOOD LUCK, FISHMAN!! HERE GOES--!

CLIK!

CLOSE CHAMBER ONE! OPEN CHAMBER TWO!

THAT'S IT! DON'T STOP!

NOW... OPEN THREE--CLOSE FOUR! NOW... FIVE--SIX--!

IT IS DONE! I'VE REACHED THE BARRIER!

NOW, THERE CAN BE NO TURNING BACK!

IN A STRANGE, NEGATIVE UNIVERSE... STRETCHING ENDLESSLY INTO INFINITY... ONLY I CAN SENSE THE PROPER DIRECTION TO TAKE..!

ONLY I CAN NAVIGATE IN THE MYSTERIOUS MIASMA OF NOWHERE!

I, WHO CAN LOCATE ONE STRAND OF SEAWEED WITHIN THE BOTTOMLESS OCEAN...

NOW MUST I FIND A HELPLESS HUMAN... BEING BORNE INEXORABLY TO HIS DEATH WITHIN THE SWIRLING SEA OF SUB-SPACE!

REMEMBER *FF #56*, WHERE REED WAS STUDYING A BIZARRE MONSTER FROM NEGATIVE SPACE? WELL, JUST TO SHOW YOU WE WEREN'T KIDDING, *TRITON* ALSO ENCOUNTERS SIMILAR UNEARTHLY DENIZENS OF THE DEADLY WORLD IN WHICH HE FINDS HIMSELF---

THERE IS NO TIME TO *INVESTIGATE* THE STRANGE LIFE-FORMS WHICH WHIRL ENDLESSLY PAST!

I MUST FIND THE ONE I SEEK... BEFORE IT IS *TOO LATE!*

AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE HUNG UP ON *IRONIC SITUATIONS*, HOW ABOUT THE FACT THAT ONE OF REED'S *PURPOSES* IN INVESTIGATING THE NEGATIVE ZONE WAS TO FIND A MEANS OF RESCUING THE *INHUMANS* FROM BEHIND THEIR UNBREAKABLE BARRIER!

NOW, ONE OF THOSE VERY *SAME* INHUMANS---HAVING BEEN FREED BY *BLACK BOLT*, RISKS HIS *OWN* LIFE TO COME TO THE AID OF *MR. FANTASTIC!*

I MUST *CHANGE COURSE!* I SENSE THAT RICHARDS IS *BEHIND* ME, HURTLING THROUGH THE *DEBRIS BELT* WHICH LIES BEYOND!

AND THEN, THE ONLY LIVING BEING WITH THE INHUMAN *POWER* TO FIND ONE LONE MAN AMIDST A BOUNDLESS, EVER-CHANGING *UNIVERSE*, SUDDENLY *SIGHTS* HIS OBJECTIVE--!

I HAVE *FOUND* HIM!! HE IS JUST *AHEAD!!*

HE *SEES* ME! BUT---HE IS TRYING TO WAVE ME *BACK!*

DON'T *DO* IT!! DON'T COME ANY *CLOSER!*

IF YOU'RE ABLE TO CHANGE YOUR COURSE ... *GO BACK!!*

IT'S *TOO LATE* TO SAVE ME! I'M PLUNGING INTO THE *EXPLODING ATMOSPHERE!!*

YOU HAVE RISKED *YOUR* LIFE IN THE PAST--- TO AID THE *INHUMANS!!*

SURELY *I* CAN DO NO *LESS!*

THEN *STAY WHERE YOU ARE!!* I'LL TRY TO *REACH* YOU IN MY *OWN* WAY!!

YOU *DID* IT! I *HAVE* YOU!

BACK!! GET *BACK*-- THE *EXPLOSIONS* ARE STARTING!! ANOTHER *SECOND* WOULD HAVE BEEN *TOO LATE!*

BUT, AS THE VALIANT *TRITON* USES HIS *AIR-JET* GUN TO ZOOM AWAY FROM THE AREA OF SPATIAL CARNAGE, NEITHER *HE* NOR THE MAN HE HAS SAVED ARE AWARE OF *ANOTHER* FIGURE IN AN ADHESION SUIT...

...A FIGURE, POSSESSING SUCH *STRENGTH*--- SUCH RAW, UNTAPPED *POWER*--- THAT THE DEADLY EXPLOSIONS DO NO MORE THAN *REVIVE* HIM, AS HE FINALLY BEGINS TO *STIR*---!

WITH AN EAR-PIERCING *ROAR* HE FREES HIS BESTIAL HEAD, STUDYING THE CATACLYSMIC SCENE WITH INSTANT *COMPREHENSION*--!

SO!! THIS IS HOW THEY THOUGHT TO RID THEMSELVES OF *BLASTAAR!*

THEN, IN A MAD, SEETHING PAROXYSM OF UNCONTROLLABLE *RAGE*, HIS MIGHTY FINGERS TENSE LIKE LIVING *DETONATORS*, AS INDESCRIBABLE *PRESSURE* SURGES FROM HIS GROPING HANDS INTO THE *ROCK* BENEATH --!

NO SUCH PUNY DEVICE CAN LONG TRAP THE MOST *DEADLY* OF ALL LIVING BEINGS!

NO SOONER ARE THE WORDS OUT OF *BLASTAAR'S* MOUTH, WHEN ...

HAH! I HAVE *DONE* IT! I AM *FREE* ONCE MORE!!

OOM!

BUR

LIKE A LIVING *ROCKET*, THE DEADLY BEING FROM NEGATIVE SPACE PROPELS HIMSELF FORWARD BY A SERIES OF INCREDIBLE *BLASTS* FROM HIS OWN UNCANNY *FINGER-TIPS* ... AS HIS MERCILESS *MIND* FORMULATES A PLAN OF ACTION ...!

THERE IS *NO PLACE* WITHIN THE NEGATIVE ZONE WHERE I CAN FIND SHELTER!!

BTOOM!

I HAVE BEEN *EXILED* FROM SUB-SPACE ... BUT, I *MUST* FIND A *HAVEN* ... SOME *NEW WORLD* TO RAVAGE!!

BTOOM!

BTOOM!

WHAT IS *THIS*?? AHEAD OF ME ... WITHIN THE *DISTORTION AREA* ... APPROACHING THE *FOURTH DIMENSION* ... TWO *FIGURES!*

THEY GO WHERE NONE *BEFORE* THEM HAVE EVER *GONE!*

HAH!! BUT NOW ... THEY WILL NOT GO THERE ... *ALONE!!*

AND, WITHIN FF HEADQUARTERS, A MOOD OF FRENZIED *DESPAIR* SETTLES LIKE A *PALL* OVER THE FOUR WHO WAIT--HARDLY DARING TO HOPE ...

IT'S BEEN SO *LONG* NOW!! ... SO *LONG*...!

YOU MUST HAVE *FAITH*, MRS. RICHARDS! *TRITON* WILL NOT *FAIL!*

IF ONLY YOU HADN'T BROKEN THE *SCANNER*, BEN! WE COULD *SEE* WHAT'S HAPPENING!!

OKAY! OKAY! HOW MUCH *LONGER* YA GONNA BEAT A DEAD HORSE?!!

I DIDN'T KNOW WE'D BE *WANTIN'* THE BLASTED GIZMO!!

WAIT!! ALL OF YOU ... *LOOK!!* LOOK AT THE *BARRIER!!*

SOMETHIN'S *HAPPENIN'* TO IT! IT'S STARTIN' TO *GLOW!!*

THAT MEANS IT'S GETTIN' *ACTIVATED!!* THERE'S SOMEONE COMIN' *THROUGH!* IT *COULD* BE ... *THEM!!*

JOHNNY!! I..I CAN'T BEAR TO LOOK! CAN YOU SEE? CAN YOU TELL WHO IT IS?

NOT YET, SUE!! BUT, WE'LL KNOW.. IN A SECOND!!

LET'S GO, KID! SOMETHIN'S MATERIALIZIN'... RIGHT NOW!!

STRETCHO!! YER BACK! HE GOT YA!! HE GOT YA!!

I CAN STILL HARDLY BELIEVE IT, BEN! I THOUGHT IT WAS CURTAINS FOR SURE THIS TIME!

SUE! I'VE GOT TO SEE HER! I KNOW... HOW SHE MUST HAVE FELT!

IT WAS A CLOSE CALL! BUT THE RESULT IS ALL THAT COUNTS!

TRITON, YOU'RE THE GREATEST!

I SHALL NOT SOON FORGET THE COURAGE, THE IRON NERVE OF YOUR MR. FANTASTIC!!

C'MON, BIG BROTHER-IN-LAW! WE'LL HELP YOU BACK INSIDE!

THERE'S ONE GOOD THING CAME OUTTA ALL THIS---HE'S TOO BUSHED TO TOSS ANY SIX-BIT WORDS AT US, ANYWAY!

BUT, EVEN AS THEY SLOWLY TRUDGE FROM THE CHAMBER---

..THERE ARE NONE TO NOTICE ANOTHER FIGURE WHO HAS SLIPPED THROUGH THE BARRIER... BEHIND THEM!

I KNOW NOT WHAT PUNY WORLD I HAVE ENTERED..!

BUT, I CAN PLAINLY SEE THAT THE BEINGS HEREIN WILL BE NO MATCH FOR THE BLUDGEONING POWER OF BLASTAAR!

STILL, I MUST FIND AN ALLY--- ONE TO GUIDE ME HERE, UNTIL I AM READY TO DISPOSE OF HIM!

CITIES... REACHING SKYWARD, INSTEAD OF BEING BUILT DEEP WITHIN THE SHELTERING PLANET ITSELF!

THIS WORLD IS STRANGER, MORE PRIMITIVE THAN I HAD SUSPECTED!

AND TO THINK...IT IS ALL MINE... MINE FOR THE TAKING!!

WHAT DO I SENSE? A GIANT HAND... REACHING FROM ABOVE!

HAH!! NOW I GOT... WHA..?!!

I THOUGHT YOU'D BE ONE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!! I NEVER SAW YOU BEFORE!

BUT, I'LL HAVE TO POLISH YOU OFF ANYWAY! CAN'T LEAVE ANYONE AROUND TO WARN THEM!

THEN YOU TOO ARE A CRIMINAL? I AM IN LUCK!

YEAH? A FAT LOTTA GOOD IT'S GONNA DO YOU!

I AM NOT CERTAIN I UNDERSTAND YOUR PRIMITIVE COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS---BUT THERE IS NO MISTAKING YOUR HOSTILE TONE OF *VOICE!*

I NOW SELECT *YOU* TO SERVE AS MY *ALLY*...MY *GUIDE*...ON THIS UNSUSPECTING PLANET!

BUT *FIRST*... SAMPLE JUST A *FRACTION* OF THE POWER I CAN UNLEASH *AGAINST* YOU IF YOU SEEK TO *BETRAY* ME!

AN *EXPLOSION!!* ..FROM YOUR *FINGERTIPS!*

BLROOM!

SPECIAL NOTE: IN CASE YOU'VE BEEN WONDERING HOW ALL OUR ALIEN CHARACTERS SEEM TO SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE, IT'S BECAUSE MOST OF THEM ARE OUTFITTED WITH AUTOMATIC MODELS OF NEW, UNIVERSALLY-APPROVED, NO-RUST, *AUTOMATIC TRANSLATORS!* (HOOO BOY!)

SAY, YOU REALLY *MEAN* IT! YOU'RE *NOT* A HUMAN! AND YOU WANNA TEAM UP WITH THE *SANDMAN*, HUH?

WELL, WHY *NOT?* ANY GUY WHO'S GOT FIVE BUILT-IN *ROCKET CANNONS* ON EACH HAND CAN COME IN MIGHTY *HANDY!*

BUT, DO NOT CONSIDER YOURSELF AN *EQUAL!*

IN THE WORLD I COME FROM, I WAS *SUPREME! NONE* COULD MATCH THE POWER OF *BLASTAAR!*

AND NOW, THIS PALTRY, DOOMED PLANET IS ABOUT TO FEEL THAT *SAME* POWER...ONCE YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME WHAT I MUST KNOW!

I'LL STRING ALONG WITH HIM FOR NOW... TILL WE'VE POLISHED OFF THE *FF!* BUT... WHAT'LL HAPPEN AFTER *THAT??*

HOWEVER, WE'VE WITNESSED *ENOUGH* TUMULT AND TRIBULATIONS FOR ONE READING, SO LET US TURN TO A *PLEASANTER* SCENE ONCE AGAIN---

IF YA EVER HEAR ME MAKE A CRACK AGAINST ANY OTHER *INHUMAN*, FISH-FACE, JUST *CLOBBER* ME WITH A WET MACKEREL!

HEY, *REED*--- *SUSIE*---BREAK IT UP! MAN, THAT'S THE LOUDEST *SILENCE* I EVER HEARD!

OH, WELL, THEY *GOTTA* COME UP FOR AIR *SOME* TIME!

I CAN IMAGINE THE *HAPPINESS* IN THEIR HEARTS, JOHNNY! --FOR, I FEEL THE *SAME!*

I'M SURE THAT WILL NEVER BE NECESSARY, MY FRIEND!

SUE...MY DARLING...

OH, REED.. REED..

BRO-*THER!!* THAT'S OUR CUE TO *CUT OUT*, CRYS!

IF YOU EVER CATCH *ME* SOUNDING LIKE THAT,... JUST WHUMP ME WITH OL' BEN'S WET MACKEREL!

IF I EVER CATCH *YOU* SOUNDING LIKE THAT, JOHNNY...I'LL PROBABLY BE THE HAPPIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD!

HEY..Y'KNOW SOMETHIN, KIDS? I MAY START GITTIN' *SICK!*

LOVE! =YECCHH!= IT'S JUST A LOTTA *MUSH!*

AT LEAST... THAT'S WHAT A SLOB LIKE *ME*--HASTA KEEP *TELLIN'* HIMSELF!

NEXT: *BLASTAAR!*

20.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

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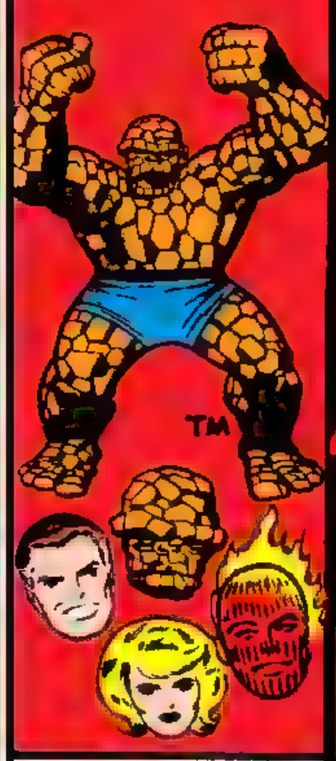

MARVEL™ COMICS GROUP

12¢ IND. 63 JUNE

"BLASTAAR, THE LIVING BOMB-BURST!"

THE FABULOUS FF, UNITED ONCE MORE, BATTLE SANDMAN AND...

"BLASTAAR, THE LIVING BOMB-BURST!"

IT FINALLY HAPPENED! THE *HUMAN TORCH* AND *CRYSTAL* HAVE *FOUND* EACH OTHER! *MR. FANTASTIC* HAS BEEN RESCUED FROM THE DEADLY *NEGATIVE ZONE* BY THE WATER-BREATHING *TRITON*! BUT, CAN THEY NOW SETTLE BACK AND ENJOY A WELL-DESERVED *REST*? *SURE* THEY CAN...FOR ABOUT *TWO SECONDS*, UNTIL---

A VIOLENT *EXPLOSION* HAS JUST OCCURRED... FROM SOME-WHERE *ABOVE* US!

WHAT'S GOIN' *ON*? THE WHOLE CRUMMY *JOINT* IS CAVIN' IN!

REED!! SOMEONE HAS BROKEN THROUGH OUR DEFENSES... AND REACHED THE *ROOF*!

WE'RE *UNDER ATTACK* AGAIN!! BUT..BY *WHOM*??

THE *CEILING* OVERHEAD IS CONSTRUCTED OF THE *STRONGEST* BUILDING MATERIALS KNOWN TO MAN!

AND YET...IT'S COLLAPSING LIKE A GIANT *MUD PIE*!

WHATEVER *AWAITS* US UP THERE IS POSSESSED OF ALMOST *UN-LIMITED POWER*!

LET'S FACE IT..!

Stan (THE MAN) LEE *and* **Jack (KING) KIRBY**

HAVE DONE IT AGAIN!

AND SO HAVE... **JOE SINNOTT**, INKER | **SAM ROSEN**, LETTERER

HEY! DO YA THINK IT COULD BE MATCH-HEAD UP THERE, SHOWIN' OFF ON ACCOUNT'A CRYSTAL?

CRYSTAL WOULD FIND NO HUMOR IN THE WANTON DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY---

THEN WHO IN THE NAME'A AUNT PETUNIA CAN IT BE?

NOT EVEN IF IT WERE ACCOMPLISHED BY HER BELOVED HUMAN TORCH!

PRETTY SOON A BLASTED BADDIE'LL HAVE TO BUY A RESERVED TICKET TO GIT A CRACK AT US!

BEN! REMEMBER THE STRANGE FORMS OF LIFE WE SAW WHEN WE STUDIED THE NEGATIVE ZONE THROUGH MY VIEWER?

WHEN TRITON BROUGHT ME BACK FROM THERE... WHEN THE ARMORED DOOR WAS OPENED FOR THOSE FEW SECONDS..

WHAT IF..UNSEEN BY US... SOMETHING ELSE CAME THROUGH THE BARRIER!

YOU MEAN.. SOME STRANGE, DEADLY ALIEN CREATURE MIGHT BE UP THERE.. RIGHT NOW??

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT!

STAY BACK... ALL OF YOU! I'LL STRETCH MYSELF UPWARD AND SEE!

BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE FANTASTIC REED RICHARDS MANAGE TO PEER THROUGH THE JAGGED OPENING ABOVE, WHEN---

BOOM

I WAS RIGHT! THERE IS SOMEONE WHO ---

UNHHH..!

ANOTHER EXPLOSION ...ABOVE US!! REED! WHAT IS IT? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT..??

HE'S FALLIN'! HE'S BEEN HIT! GIMME ROOM... I'LL CATCH 'IM!

EXPLOSION--FROM-- HIS FINGERS! HIS FINGERS..!

REED!

IT'S MY FAULT! I SHOULD HAVE THROWN AN INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD AROUND HIM!

BUT, EVERYTHING HAPPENED SO FAST..!

OKAY, KIDDIES! EVERYONE SIT TIGHT WHILE BASHFUL BENJAMIN GITS HISSELF UP THERE!

NO! I SHALL DO IT! I CAN REACH THE SPOT FIRST!

I'M ALL RIGHT-- BUT--THERE'S SOMEONE ON THE ROOF-- WITH UNCANNY POWER--!

TELL TRITON-- TO WAIT! IT ISN'T HIS FIGHT! HE'S DONE HIS SHARE--!

THE BATTLE AGAINST EVIL IS EVERYONE'S FIGHT!

EVEN AN INHUMAN HAS A CODE TO LIVE BY!

SHOO SH!

BUT YER ONLY WEAPON IS THAT NUTTY AIR GUN--!

ANOTHER ONE! NO MATTER... BLASTAAR WILL DRIVE HIM BACK WITH EASE!

BAH! HIS SPEED WAS GREATER THAN I EXPECTED!

RICHARDS WAS RIGHT! HE ACTUALLY CREATES SOME SORT OF SHATTERING EXPLOSIONS WHICH BURST FORTH FROM HIS OWN FINGERTIPS!!

I MUST STRIKE SUDDENLY--WITHOUT WARNING... BEFORE HE CAN HURL A SECOND SUCH BLAST!

BTOOM

YOU MISSED 'IM, BLASTAAR! YOU STILL AREN'T AS FAST AS SANDMAN!

IF HE IS A BEING FROM THE UNEARTHLY NEGATIVE ZONE, THE SCIENCE OF FIST-FIGHTING MAY BE UNKNOWN TO HIM!

FOR, THERE IS ANOTHER BEHIND HIM WHO CALLS HIMSELF SANDMAN! THERE IS NO TELLING WHEN OR HOW HE, TOO MAY STRIKE!

I MUST PRESS MY ADVANTAGE WHILE I STILL CAN!

BOK!

THOUGH HE IS WITHOUT SKILL IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT, HIS STRENGTH IS TRULY AWESOME!

I DARE NOT STOP POUNDING HIM, LEST HE DESTROYS ME WITH HIS NEXT BLAST!

BUT SUDDENLY, THE IMPATIENT *SANDMAN* LAUNCHES HIS *OWN* UNEXPECTED ATTACK, TEMPORARILY *BLINDING* THE ONE CALLED *TRITON* WITH A SHOWER OF SWIRLING, STINGING *SAND*--!

WHAT IS *THIS*? WHO *DARES* INTERFERE WHEN *BLASTAAR* IS ENGAGED IN BATTLE?

I GOT TIRED OF WAITIN' ON THE *SIDELINES*, MISTER!

THIS IS WHAT *SANDMAN* CAN DO--WITH OR *WITHOUT* ANY HELP!

=ARGHHHH!=

MORTAL FOOL!! YOU THINK *BLASTAAR* CANNOT DO *EQUALLY* WELL?

I HAVE NEVER FOUGHT WITH MY KNUCKLES BENT IN THE FORM OF *FISTS* BEFORE---

BUT, NOW THAT I HAVE LEARNED THE *WAY* OF IT---

SPOK!

THERE IS *NO* POWER TO MATCH THE BLUDGEONING POWER OF *BLAS-TAAR*

HE THREW THAT PUNCH SO *FAST*, I COULDN'T EVEN *SEE* IT!

I CAN'T TURN MY *BACK* ON HIM FOR A *MINUTE*! HE'D GIVE *ME* THE SAME TREATMENT WHENEVER IT *SUITS* 'IM!

REMEMBER... YOUR ONLY *VALUE* TO ME IS THAT YOU *KNOW* THIS WORLD---YOU CAN SERVE AS MY *GUIDE*! BUT, IF YOU EVER DARE *BETRAY* ME--!

FORGET IT, BLASTAAR! WE MAKE TOO GOOD A *TEAM*!

THEN *COME*... SHOW ME *MORE* OF THIS PUNY WORLD...WHICH WILL SOON BE *MINE*!

OKAY, PARTNER! HANG ON... WE'RE GOIN' *DOWN-STAIRS!*

YOU'VE MADE YOUR *HAND* LARGE ENOUGH TO *LIFT* ME!

IF THIS IS A *TRICK*, TAKE *WARNING!!* I'LL REDUCE YOU TO *ATOMS* WITH ONE FULL *POWER BLAST!*

DON'T GET YOUR *JAWS* IN AN UPROAR! WE'RE STILL ON THE SAME TEAM!

JUST *WATCH...*

YOU WALK DOWN THE SIDE OF THIS BUILDING AS THOUGH *GRAVITY* ITSELF HAS NO EFFECT UPON YOU!

HOW CAN THIS *BE?*

NOTHIN' *TO* IT, PAL!

I JUST MIX SOME *CHEMICALS* WHICH I CARRY IN MY BELT, AND I COME UP WITH *ADHESIVE SAND!*

NOW *HANG ON!* HERE'S WHERE I BEGIN YOUR *EDUCATION...!*

SECONDS LATER, JOHNNY STORM AND THE GIRL NAMED *CRYSTAL* RUSH FROM THE RESTAURANT IN WHICH THEY HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT THE THINGS THAT *ALL* YOUNG LOVERS HAVE TALKED ABOUT SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL...

JOHNNY! ALL THE *NOISE*.. THE *COMMOTION*..THE *SHOUTING* IN THE STREET!! WHAT CAN IT *BE?*

UP *THERE*.. ON THAT *BUILDING!! LOOK!*

I'D RATHER NOT *KNOW*, CRYS HONEY!

IF IT'S *TROUBLE*, THE *HUMAN TORCH* MAY BE NEEDED AGAIN!

I *SEE* WHAT THEY'RE *POINTING* AT!

ON THAT *WALL*...DOWN THE STREET-- IT LOOKS LIKE *TWO FIGURES*... AND *ONE* OF 'EM IS... THE *SANDMAN!*

THAT MEANS THERE IS *DANGER* AGAIN!

JUST WHEN WE HAVE FINALLY *FOUND* EACH OTHER!

JOHNNY..DON'T LET IT *SEPARATE* US AGAIN! PLEASE, JOHNNY---*DON'T..!*

NOTHING'S GONNA TAKE YOU FROM ME AGAIN, CRYS! NO MATTER *WHAT!*

BUT I STILL HAVE MY *DUTY* TO THE *FF!* I'VE GOTTA FIND OUT WHAT SANDMAN'S *UP* TO---AND WHO THAT *OTHER* CLOWN CAN BE!

EEEEEEE!

MAYBE THERE WON'T BE ANYTHING FOR *ME* TO DO AFTER ALL, HONEY!

LOOKS LIKE HALF THE COPS IN *TOWN* ARE ZEROIN' IN ON THE SPOT!

RRRRR

P.D.

WHY DO CROWDS OF SHOUTING HUMANS *SURROUND* US?

EXPLAIN, SANDMAN-- BEFORE I BLAST EVERY LAST ONE OUT OF *EXISTENCE!*

BECAUSE OF *ME!* I'M WANTED BY THE FUZZ FOR BUSTIN' OUTTA *JAIL!*

STAY WHERE YOU *ARE*, SAND-MAN! WE'VE GOT YOU *SURROUNDED!* YOU CAN'T GET AWAY!

HE'S NOT *STOPPING!* LET 'IM *HAVE* IT!

THIS SPECIALLY MADE *CEMENT GUN* WILL PREVENT HIM FROM USING HIS *SAND MOLECULES* AGAINST US

GOOD SHOT! IT'LL BE ROCK HARD WITHIN *SECONDS*, TRAPPING HIM ON THE SPOT!

WEAKLING!! BREAK FREE! SURELY SO SIMPLE A WEAPON CAN-NOT *AFFECT* YOU! *FREE YOURSELF!*

THWUP!

OKAY... *CLOSE IN!* AND WATCH OUT FOR THE *OTHER* ONE!

I *CAN'T* BUST OUT!! THE CEMENT'S TOO *HARD!*

IT'S THE ONE THING I DIDN'T *EXPECT!* IT'S GETTIN' *HARDER*... EVERY SECOND! THERE'S NOTHIN' I CAN *DO*..!!

LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL HAVE'TA GET YOURSELF *ANOTHER* BOY, BLASTAAR!

NO! NONE CAN MAKE ME ALTER MY PLANS!

I CAN STILL *FREE* YOU WITH BUT *ONE* SIMPLE BLAST..!

KRAKK!

...A BLAST *POWERFUL* ENOUGH TO SHATTER THAT WHICH *BINDS* YOU!

BUT, CAREFULLY *MUFFLED* TO CAUSE YOU NO *HARM!*

HOLY COW!! THE OTHER ONE'S MORE DANGEROUS THAN SANDMAN!

CRA...

GOOD WORK, BLASTAAR! THEY CAN'T *HIT* US WITH YOU TOSSIN' THOSE *EXPLOSIONS* ALL AROUND 'EM!

YOU HUMANS ARE LIKE *CHILDREN*, PLAYING WITH *TOYS*..!

I WILL SHOW YOU WHAT *REAL* POWER IS!

BTOOM!

I'VE SEEN *ENOUGH*, CRYS!

I CAN'T STAY ON THE *SIDELINES* ANY LONGER!

FLAME ON!

BLASTAAR!! UP *ABOVE* US... IT'S THE *TORCH!*

FORGET EVERYONE *ELSE!!* HE'S THE ONE TO WORRY ABOUT!

BLASTAAR WORRIES ABOUT *NONE!*

I DON'T *GET* IT! THAT GUY CAUSES *EXPLOSIONS*.. JUST BY POINTING HIS *HANDS!*

BUT, I CAN'T TURN BACK *NOW!*

LIKE *REED* AND *BEN* ALWAYS SAY... WE CAN'T JUST PICK THE *EASY* JOBS!

WE GOTTA *TAKE* 'EM AS THEY *COME!*

BACK, YOU FLAMING, FLYING FOOL!! BACK!!

NO MATTER WHAT THE EXTENT OF YOUR MORTAL POWER MAY BE---IT IS AS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE MIGHT OF BLASTAAR!!

THE POWER OF ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION LIES WITHIN MY HANDS!! THE POWER TO WIPE OUT AN ENEMY--TO DEVASTATE AN ARMY...TO OBLITERATE A WORLD!!

I FEAR NOTHING!! I CAN BE STOPPED BY NO ONE! I AM A LAW UNTO MYSELF!! I AM SUPREME!! I AM BLASTAAR!!

IT'S NO GOOD! HE'S GOIN' MAD! HE'S DRUNK WITH POWER!

I GOTTA SHOW 'IM I'M AS STRONG AS HE IS, BEFORE HE DECIDES TO TURN ON ME, TOO!

OKAY, BEAVER... YOU *MADE* YOUR POINT! BUT THE *PAYOFF* AROUND HERE IS IN *ACTION*, NOT MAKIN' *SPEECHES!*

SO STAND ASIDE WHILE I SHOW YA THE WAY THE *SANDMAN* CAN STOP THAT FLAMIN' FREAK'S ATTACK!

MAN! WOTTA DEAL! THEY'RE LIKE *RUSSIA* AND *RED CHINA!*

EVEN THOUGH *I'M* THE MAIN ENEMY, THEY'RE NOT BUSTIN' AT THE SEAMS WITH BROTHERLY LOVE FOR EACH *OTHER*, EITHER!

WHAT?!! YOU *STILL* PRESUME TO MATCH *YOUR* PALTRY POWER AGAINST *MINE?*

NICE *TRY*, SANDY... BUT THE DAY HASN'T COME WHEN I CAN'T FLY *RINGS* AROUND ANYTHING *YOU* CAN TOSS AT *ME!*

YOU *THINK* SO? THEN TRY DODGIN' *THESE*, HOT-HEAD!

WHIIII

HE'S FORMING *GRANITE BOULDERS* AND TOSSING 'EM AT ME!

BUT THEN, SUDDENLY, THE STRANGE, RASPING, *UNEARTHLY VOICE* OF THE BEING CALLED *BLASTAAR* THUNDERS ABOVE THE SOUND OF BATTLE...

I HAVE WITNESSED *ENOUGH!*

NOW, WITH BUT ONE SINGLE *GESTURE*, I WILL *DESTROY* THE HUMAN TORCH!

THE HECK YOU *WILL!*

ZOK

WHAT'S *THAT?!!*

SOME *NEW* FORCE HAS SEIZED US!

IF ANYONE'S GONNA DO ANY *DESTROYIN'* AROUND HERE, AUNT PETUNIA'S BLUSHIN' BLUE-EYED NEPHEW *BENJAMIN* IS GONNA GIT FIRST CRACK AT IT... *DIG?*

BLASTAAR... IT.. IT'S THE *THING!*

YOU BETCHA LITTLE *BOOTIES* IT IS, SWEETIE!

TAKE NO CHANCES WITH HIM!!! HE'S DANGEROUS..!
YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT, CURLY.!
CAN SOMEONE SO GROTESQUE BE AN EARTHLING, TOO?
NOW YA DID IT! YA HURT MY FEELIN'S!!
BEN! BE CAREFUL! HE'S NOT HUMAN!
HE HAS THE POWER TO... HEY!!
LOOK OUT!! SANDMAN'S ESCAPING! HE'S CHANGED HIS MOLECULES TO FINE SAND... POURING THROUGH HIS COSTUME..!
SURE!! NOW YA TELL ME!
CAN'T STOP 'IM!
NO MATTER WHERE I DIRECT MY FLAME, HIS FAST-MOVING GRAINS KEEP DISPERSING SOMEWHERE ELSE!
HE'S GETTING AWAY-- DOWN THROUGH THAT GRATING!! I'M LOSING HIM!
I'M TOO LATE! HE'S GONE!
I'D BETTER TURN BACK AND SEE WHAT BEN... OH, NO!!
ANOTHER EXPLOSION!!
NOW, YOU ORANGE-HUED MONSTROSITY... YOU WILL FEEL THE BLISTERING, BLUDGEONING POWER OF BLASTAAR!!

BENJY TOOK THE FULL *BRUNT* OF IT...WHICH MEANS IT'S UP TO *ME* NOW!

NOW, BOOM-BOOM, WHILE YOU'RE *WAIT-ING*, I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO CHEW ON, ALSO!

YOU ARROGANT *FOOL!* ANYONE *ELSE* WOULD HAVE FLED IN MINDLESS *PANIC* AFTER WHAT YOU'VE JUST SEEN!

ONCE...JUST *ONCE*...CAN'T WE EVER FIGHT A GUY WHO DON'T MAKE *SPEECHES*?!!

BOOM

BIG DEAL! SO YA MANAGED TO SNUFF OUT TORCHY'S *FLAME!*

A KID IN *KINDERGARTEN* WITH A SECOND-HAND *WATER-GUN* COULD'A DONE THE SAME THING!

BUT *NOW* LET'S SEE WHATCHA CAN DO AGAINST A GUY WHO CAN GRAB THEM CRAZY *MITTS* OF YOURS!

GO ON...LET OUT ANOTHER BLAST...WHAT ARE YA *WAITIN'* FOR? *BOMBS AWAY, BABY!*

WELL? WHAT'S *STOPPIN'* YA? JUST 'CAUSE I GOT YER FINGERS POINTIN' AT YER *OWN* UGLY *KISSER*? SAY...YA OUGHTTA *DO* SOMETHIN' ABOUT THEM *DISHPAN HANDS!*

BUT, EVERYONE IS BOUND TO MAKE *ONE* MISTAKE SOME TIME OR OTHER...AND THE EVER-LOVIN' *THING* MAKES *HIS* BY NOT REALIZING THAT *BLASTAAR'S* STRENGTH IS FAR *GREATER* THAN THAT OF ANY ORDINARY HUMAN BEING...FAR GREATER THAN BEN *SUSPECTED*--!

FOR *THAT* YOU WILL PERISH AS *NONE* HAVE EVER PERISHED BEFORE!!

WELL, THERE'S ALWAYS GOTTA BE A *FIRST* TIME!

KHUMP!

I WILL NOT EVEN *USE* MY OWN MATCHLESS *EXPLOSIVE* POWER..!

I WANT TO *CRUSH* YOU WITH MY BARE *HANDS*!! I'LL SHOW YOU THAT THE STRENGTH OF *BLASTAAR* IS FAR GREATER THAN *YOURS*!

HAH! YOUR HEART IS NOW SO FILLED WITH COWARDLY *FEAR* THAT YOU CLUTCH AT THE *GROUND* BELOW YOU IN FUTILE *PANIC*!!

KRRUNCHHHH!

AWWW...SHADDUP!

ALL I WANNA *DO* IS MASSAGE YER UGLY PAN WITH A HUNK'A *SIDEWALK*... LIKE *THIS!*

ARRHHHH!

IT IS NOT *POSSIBLE!* NO HUMAN CAN POSSESS SUCH *POWER!*

FLOMP!

SKRAK!

SHUCKS, YOU AIN'T SEEN *NOTHIN'* YET!

IN FACT, I GOT A *REAL* THREAT IN STORE FOR YA NOW...!

JUST IN CASE YA LOST YER *WRIST WATCH* OR SOMETHIN', I'M GONNA SHOW YA WHAT *TIME* IT IS...

IT'S *CLOBBERIN'* TIME!

MEANWHILE, BACK IN *REED RICHARDS'* FAMOUS ALL-PURPOSE LAB, *ANOTHER* GRIPPING TABLEAU IS NOW UNDER WAY ---

WILL HE... RECOVER FROM THE BLOW...THAT *FELLED* HIM, REED?

I *THINK* SO, DEAR!

THE *HEALING BALM* WHICH I'M ADDING TO THE FLUID WITHIN HIS HYDROGENOUS TANK SHOULD HAVE HIM *BACK TO NORMAL* WITHIN THE HOUR!

BUT, NOW THAT I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN *TRITON* WILL BE ALL RIGHT, WE HAVE A MORE *URGENT* PROBLEM TO COPE WITH...!

SSSSS

SSSSSSSSSS

YOU MEAN... *BLASTAAR!*

YES! I'M *CONVINCED* HE ENTERED OUR WORLD FROM THE *NEGATIVE ZONE* OF SUB-SPACE DURING THE BRIEF TIME OUR ARMORED *DOOR* WAS OPEN!

HIS POWER IS *GREATER* THAN ANYONE *DREAMS!* HE CAN CREATE DEADLY *PRESSURE* WITHIN HIS OWN BODY... AND *RELEASE* IT FROM HIS FINGER-TIPS IN THE FORM OF SHATTERING *EXPLOSIONS!*

AND, HE HAS THE HORRIBLE *SANDMAN* TO AID AND *ADVISE* HIM!

BEN MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD HIM OFF MUCH *LONGER!*

SO, ONCE *AGAIN* IT'S UP TO *ME* TO DEVISE SOME *DEFENSE* AGAINST HIS UNCANNY *POWER!*

CLICK!

REED! I'VE JUST PICKED UP *JOHNNY* ON THE TELE-MONITOR!

CRYSTAL IS HELPING HIM TO HIS *FEET!* HE MUST HAVE BEEN FLOORED BY *BLASTAAR!*

DARLING! WHERE ARE YOU *GOING..?*

IT'S *OKAY*, HON! I JUST *THOUGHT* OF SOME-THING!

IT'S *GOT* TO BE HERE *SOMEWHERE!*

IT WAS THE *LAST* PROJECT I WAS WORKING ON... BEFORE I GOT INVOLVED WITH THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!*

I *MUST* FIND IT..FOR THE SAKE OF *BEN* AND *JOHNNY*...

AND *ALL* OF US!

AND, WHILE TRITON RECOVERS .. SUE WORRIES .. AND, REED SEARCHES ...

STAY BACK, BLASTAAR!! LET ME HAVE THE THING!

=SHEESH!= ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM!

WE GOT US A PRIVATE LITTLE SCORE TO SETTLE!

THE SANDMAN!

SAY YOUR PRAYERS, YOU ORANGE-SKINNED APE!

THIS TIME I'LL MAKE SURE THAT YOU NEVER INTERFERE WITH MY PLANS AGAIN...

'ZAT SO? WHATCHA AIMIN' TO DO... LEAVE TOWN?

JUST BE PATIENT... YOU'LL SOON FIND OUT!

YOU'RE ABOUT TO LEARN A LESSON--THAT'LL LAST YOU FOR-EVER!

WE'RE HEADIN' FER THE RIVER!

IT AINT HARD TO GUESS WHAT HE'S GOT IN MIND!

SANDMAN!! COME BACK WITH HIM! BLASTAAR WILL NOT BE DEPRIVED OF A VICTIM!

DON'T WORRY, BIG MAN... I'LL KEEP YOU BUSY FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES!

NO, JOHNNY.. NO! HE IS TOO DANGEROUS!

AHH! THE VOICE OF A FEMALE! AND A FAIR ONE, AS WELL!

THEN THIS PALTRY PLANET DOES HAVE A REDEEMING FEATURE AFTER ALL!

STAY BACK! DO NOT DRAW NEAR ME! I WARN YOU!

WHAT?? YOU.. A MERE FEMALE.. DARE TO REPULSE BLASTAAR?!!

THEN, BEFORE ANOTHER SYLLABLE CAN BE UTTERED, A TWISTING, TURNING, TITANIC TORNADO SEEMS TO APPEAR FROM NOWHERE ---

I WARNED YOU!!

IT IS.. LIKE MAGIC!! .. AS THOUGH SHE WILLED IT TO HAPPEN!

IT SEEMS THAT BLASTAAR HAS MUCH TO *LEARN!*

I DID NOT SUSPECT THAT ALMOST *ALL* EARTH BEINGS POSSESSED *SUPER-POWERS* OF THEIR OWN!

I'VE GOT MY *FLAME* BACK, CRYS!

YOU GET YOURSELF TO *SHELTER* SOMEWHERE... *FAST!* I'LL TACKLE HIM *AGAIN*... AND *THIS* TIME I'LL KNOW WHAT TO *EXPECT!*

YOU INEPT, YOUNG *BUMBLER!!*

KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT...AND BEING ABLE TO *DO* ANYTHING ABOUT IT...ARE TWO *DIFFERENT* THINGS!

BLAM!

WHAT IS *THIS*..?!!

YOU *INCREASE* YOUR FLAME..SO THAT YOU *ABSORB* MY EXPLOSIVE BLAST!

JOHNNY IS *GLOWING*... LIKE A LIVING *STAR*..THE SIGHT IS DAZZLING... *BLINDING*..!

JOHNNY..JOHNNY..BE *CAREFUL!!* DON'T TAMPER WITH FORCES WHICH *NO* MAN MAY CONTROL..!!

OKAY, BLASTAAR.. NOW IT'S *MY* TURN..!

I'VE *TAKEN* THE BEST YOU COULD TOSS AT ME...AND CONVERTED IT TO RAW *HEAT!!*

AND NOW...YOU CAN HAVE IT *BACK* AGAIN.. IN *SPADES!!*

A *CLEVER* MANEUVER, TORCH...EXCEPT FOR *ONE* SMALL FACT..!

YOU DID NOT REALIZE THAT MY *OWN* BODY...TEMPERED BY THE EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS OF *SUB-SPACE*... CAN *ADJUST* TO *ANY* EXTREME OF HEAT OR COLD *INSTANTANEOUSLY!*

AND NOW, WE'LL PUT AN *END* TO THIS FUTILE, PRIMITIVE DISPLAY..!

HIS ENTIRE *BODY* IS HURLING BACK MY OWN *CHARGE* AT ME--!!

HE'S *TOO* POWERFUL! I'VE GOTTA PUT MORE *DISTANCE* BETWEEN US TILL I CAN DREAM UP *ANOTHER* FORM OF ATTACK!

WHILE, AT THE WATERFRONT, THE *SANDMAN* HAS FINALLY REACHED HIS DEADLY DESTINATION---

EVERYTHING WENT *EXACTLY* AS I PLANNED!

EVEN THE *THING'S* OWN STRENGTH COULDN'T STOP HIM FROM LOSING *CONSCIOUSNESS* DUE TO THE *WHIRLING* I SUBJECTED HIM TO

AND SO... IT'S *FAREWELL* AT LAST... FAREWELL *FOREVER*.. TO MY ONCE-GREATEST *ENEMY!*

BUT, NOT ONLY DO BEN GRIMM'S MASSIVE *LIMBS* POSSESS SUPER-HUMAN STRENGTH, BUT HIS *LUNGS* DO, AS WELL! THEREFORE, THOUGH THE COMATOSE *THING* PLUNGES HEAVILY DOWNWARD, THE CHILLING EFFECT OF THE WATER GRADUALLY BEGINS TO *REVIVE* HIM---!

—AND THEN...

SLOWLY, SILENTLY, HIS BLAZING, RAGE-FILLED *EYES* START TO OPEN - - -

- - - AS, WITHOUT A SECOND'S HESITATION, HE ZOOMS *UPWARD* AGAIN - - - TOWARDS THE *PIER* ABOVE - - -

HE *MUST* HAVE DROWNED BY NOW!! *NOBODY* COULD STAY UNDERWATER THAT LONG AND *LIVE!*

THIS IS MY MOST *GLORIOUS* MOMENT! I - - - AND I *ALONE* - - HAVE DESTROYED THE MOST *POWERFUL* MEMBER OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR!*

DON'T *BET* ON IT, YOU CREEP!

HUH? *WHAT...?* WHAT WAS *THAT??*

CRASH!

IT WUZ THE GUY YA JUST "*DESTROYED*"--- WHAT *ELSE?!!*

NOW, SANDY... JUST *HOLD THAT POSE...* HEAR?

EVER SEE A PICTURE THAT *NO* SOUND EFFECT COULD DO JUSTICE TO?

WELL, YOU'RE LOOKING AT ONE RIGHT *NOW*, TRUE BELIEVER..!

BUT THEN...

NUTS!! HE'S DISSOLVED ALL HIS SAND MOLECULES AND HE'S SCATTERIN' 'EM--- SO'S I CAN'T WHUMP 'IM AGAIN!

AND THE TIDE'S CARRYIN' 'IM OFF IN A ZILLION DIRECTIONS AT ONCE..!

WELL, NO SENSE COMPLAININ'! IT TURNED OUT OKAY ANYHOW!

I FIGGER IT'LL TAKE MONTHS FER THE SAND-MAN TO BRING HIMSELF TOGETHER AGAIN...

SO THAT GITS 'IM OFF'A OUR BACKS FER NOW!

AT THAT MOMENT...ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN...

MORE SUPER-POWERFUL HUMANS!!

BUT, I'LL FINISH YOU ALL OFF WITH A FEW MERE BLASTS!

I KNEW YOU'D SHOW UP, REED!

BUT, WHAT IS IT YOU'RE TRYIN' TO DO?

I'VE GOT TO FIT THIS HELMET ONTO BLASTAAR'S HEAD--- SOMEHOW--- BEFORE HE CONNECTS WITH ONE OF THOSE EXPLOSIVE BOLTS!

BAH!! THAT INFERNAL BODY OF HIS BENDS AND STRETCHES AWAY FROM MY BLASTS... BUT THE FEMALE SHALL NOT BE SO FORTUNATE!

WHAT IS THIS?? I CANNOT STRIKE HER, EITHER!!

IT WORKED! I DIVERTED HIS ATTENTION FROM REED!

NOW, IF MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD WILL JUST HOLD OUT!

HEADS UP, GANG!

I'LL SOFTEN UP THE GROUND BENEATH BLASTAAR'S FEET, SO HE'LL FAW DOWN 'N GO BOOM!

GOOD WORK, JOHNNY! THAT WAS THE VERY CHANCE I NEEDED!

IF I CAN JUST SECURE THIS HELMET TO HIS HEAD, WE'LL HAVE HIM!!

IT CONTAINS A CUT-OFF DEVICE TO PREVENT THE EXPLOSIVE PRESSURE FROM BUILDING UP WITHIN HIS BODY!

REED!! LOOK OUT!! HIS FINGERS..!!

BTOOM!

I FAILED--- FAILED..!!

SUE! JOHNNY! CRYSTAL!

NEVER MIND ME! SAVE YOURSELVES!! I'LL KEEP HIM BUSY--- WHILE YOU MAKE IT TO SHELTER..!

BITE YOUR TONGUE, BROTHER-IN-LAW!

IT'S BLASTAAR WHO'S GONNA NEED THE SHELTER!

LET'S SEE HOW A FIRE-WALL DOWN THERE'LL GRAB YOU, BLASTY!

HAH! ONCE AGAIN THE OVERCONFIDENCE OF YOUTH HAS BEEN YOUR UNDOING!

I HAVE YOU NOW!! YOUR FLAME CANNOT HARM ME!!

I AM NOT SOME PUNY *HUMAN* WHO CAN BE DRIVEN OFF BY THE POWER OF *FIRE!*

I..AM... ***BLASTAAR!***

THANKS TO *JOHNNY*, I'VE A *SECOND CHANCE!!*

AND *THIS* TIME-- I'LL *MAKE* IT!

THWUPP!

THERE! BY CUTTING OFF THE *PRESSURE BUILD-UP* IN YOUR BODY... YOU BECOME AS VULNERABLE AS *ANY* MAN!

NO! NO... YOU *CAN'T!* YOU ***CAN'T!!***

DON'T *BET* ON IT, BIG MAN!

WE "PUNY HUMANS" HAVE A HABIT OF FIGHTING *BACK!*

WOW-EEE! ANYONE WHO THINKS A ONE-MAN *BRAIN TRUST* LIKE YOU HAS TO BE A *POWDER-PUFF*, SHOULD'A SEEN THAT *HAYMAKER!*

I'M ALMOST *SORRY* HE'S NOT GETTING UP! I'M ACHING TO GIVE HIM *MORE* OF THE SAME!

REED--DARLING--IS IT *OVER?* IS IT REALLY OVER... AT LAST--??

YOU *BET* IT IS, HONEY! BLASTAAR IS *HELPLESS* NOW!

FORGIVE ME-- FOR--SUDDENLY TURNING--- FEMININE--!

NONSENSE, DEAREST! YOU DID YOUR SHARE... WHEN IT *COUNTED!*

NOW, MUCH AS I WANT TO *STUDY* BLASTAAR--- WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM *BACK*--- BACK TO THE *NEGATIVE ZONE*... TO HIS OWN WORLD!

WHAT *GIVES*, STRETCHO? LOOKS LIKE I MISSED ALL THE *FUN!*

YOU'RE *ALONE!* WHAT HAPPENED TO *SANDMAN?*

HE'S *KAPUT* FER A WHILE!

I'D'A BEEN HERE *SOONER*, BUT YA CAN NEVER FIND A *CAB* WHEN YA NEED ONE!

TAXI

BEN, WE'VE GOT TO TAKE BLASTAAR BACK--TO THE *SUB-SPACE* LAB!

RATS! EVERY TIME YOU SAY "*WE*" THAT WAY---IT ENDS UP MEANIN' *ME!*

I NEVER SHOULD'A LET THAT BLASTED *CAB* GIT AWAY!

OHH--MY POOR, TIRED TOOTSIES--!

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GOOD WORK, BEN!

BY REMOVING THAT *POWER CORE*, NO CREATURE FROM THE *NEGATIVE ZONE* WILL EVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO ENTER OUR WORLD THRU THE OPEN *BARRIER DOOR!**

DO YOU ALWAYS HAVETA GIT ON A BLASTED *TALKIN' KICK* EVERYTIME I'M *HOLDIN'* SOMETHIN'?!!

SUE! WHAT *IS* IT, DEAR? WHAT'S *WRONG?*

DO YOU REALIZE THAT YOU TWO HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR OVER A *WEEK*-- WITHOUT REST.?!!

MAYBE IT'S *YOUR* IDEA OF A GREAT WAY TO ENJOY THIS LOVELY SPRING WEATHER-- BUT IT ISN'T *MINE!*

*WE SUSPECT THAT *REED RICHARDS* IS REFERRING TO THE INVADER NAMED *BLASTAAR* WHOM THE F.F. DRAMATICALLY DEFEATED LAST ISH, REMEMBER? *SURE* YOU DO!--STALWART STAN.

FOR CRYIN' OUT *LOUD*, SUE--USE YOUR *HEAD* FOR A CHANGE!

THAT'S IT, MR. RICHARDS --*YELL* AT ME! ACT LIKE A TYPICAL *HUSBAND!*

HOW COULD WE GET *ANY* REST--HOW COULD WE RELAX FOR A *MINUTE*-- SO LONG AS *DANGER* THREATENED?

YOU MIGHT AS WELL PUT A HUGE *BILLBOARD* UP ON TIMES SQUARE ANNOUNCING THAT THE *HONEYMOON IS OVER!*

AS *LEADER* OF THIS TEMPERAMENTAL TEAM, I'VE *GOT* TO DO MY JOB--NO MATTER *WHAT!*

YOU--NEVER TALKED TO ME--LIKE THIS-- *BEFORE* WE WERE MARRIED--!!

I'M *SORRY*, SUE DARLING! YOU *KNOW* I WOULDN'T HURT YOU FOR THE *WORLD!*

I DON'T MEAN TO BE A NAGGING WIFE, DEAR!

I GUESS YOU'RE *RIGHT* --WE *DO* NEED A REST! WE'VE BEEN SNAPPING AT EACH OTHER ALL *WEEK!*

IT'S JUST THAT I CAN'T HELP--*WORRYING* ABOUT YOU! I WANT EVERYTHING BETWEEN US TO ALWAYS BE--AS *PERFECT* AS IT'S BEEN--IN THE PAST!

NOW THAT THE *BARRIER DOOR* IS FINALLY SEALED OFF FOR GOOD, IT'S TIME WE ALL TOOK A *VACATION!*

IT ALWAYS *WILL* BE, HONEY! I LOVE YOU MORE-- EACH DAY!

THAT SINKS IT!

IT'S BAD ENUFF WHEN YA MAKE A *HUMAN DERRICK* OUTTA ME--BUT IF I GOTTA STAND 'N' LISTEN TO THAT *YICCCHHY MUSH* ANY LONGER-- *FERGET IT!*

SORRY, OLD FRIEND! I FORGOT YOU WERE *THERE!*

AND START *PACKING*, BIG FELLA! WE'RE GONNA *VACATION* OUR FOOL *HEADS* OFF!

YOU CAN PUT THAT *DOWN* NOW, BEN-- ANY PLACE!

I'LL FIND *JOHNNY*, *CRYSTAL*, AND *TRITON* --AND TELL THEM THE *NEWS*, DARLING!

I'M TAKING A BACK SEAT, HEAR? *YOU* TWO CAN EVEN PICK THE *SPOT!*

BUT, AS A MOOD OF GROWING EXCITEMENT SWEEPS THRU THE TOP STORIES OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS *BAXTER BUILDING*, AN EVENT IS OCCURRING HALF-WAY AROUND THE GLOBE--AN EVENT WHICH WILL BE OF MORE THAN PASSING INTEREST TO ALL TRUE BELIEVERS--

I TELL YA THERE'S *NOTHIN'* ON THIS ISLAND, PROFESSOR!

WE ARE NOT *SEARCHING* FOR MOSQUITOES, MY FRIEND!

WE SEEK SOMETHING FAR MORE *WONDROUS*--AND I *KNOW* WE SHALL *FIND* IT HERE!

EVEN *MOSQUITOES* WOULDN'T WANNA BE STUCK ON A CRUMMY, NOWHERE PLACE LIKE *THIS!*

OKAY! SO LONG AS YA *PAY* ME FOR THIS WILD-GOOSE CHASE, I'LL STRING ALONG!

BUT, Y'KNOW SOMETHIN'?

ANY JOKER WHO'D TOSS GOOD DOUGH AWAY SEARCHIN' FOR SOMETHING THAT *DON'T EXIST* DOESN'T NEED A *GUIDE*--

I FIGGER YA SHOULDA HIRED A *KEEPER!*

EVERYONE THINKS I'M MAD --BUT I'M *NOT!* I *KNOW* WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK!

I *KNOW* THERE WAS ONCE AN *ALIEN CIVILIZATION* WHICH RULED THIS PLANET BEFORE THE DAWN OF HISTORY--

AND MY RESEARCH *PROVES* THAT IT WAS ON *THIS VERY SPOT* THAT THEY LANDED-- IT WAS *HERE* THAT THEY LIVED!

THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE *KREE,* AND THEY--*WAIT!! LOOK!!*

OVER *THERE!!* WE'VE *FOUND* SOMETHING--!

IT'S THE *SPIRE*-- THE ONE I READ ABOUT IN THE ANCIENT TABLETS OF THE *INCAS!!*

NOW, ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT INCA *LEGENDS,* ALL I NEED DO IS POINT THIS BROKEN HAND OF THE *LOST IDOL* AT THE SPIRE, AND--

ZZZZIS-T!

IT'S *WORKING!* IT'S STARTING TO *GLOW!! LOOK*--IT'S EMITTING *ENERGY WAVES*--!

AND--ALL THIS TIME-- I THOUGHT-- YOU WERE JUST A *CRACKPOT!!*

KRAK!

LOOK OUT!! THE WHOLE BLAMED *HILL* IS CRACKIN' UP--THERE'S SOMETHIN' *UNDER* IT-- *PUSHING*--!!

IT'S THE *SECRET MECHANISM*-- THE LONG HIDDEN DEVICE WHICH WILL EXPOSE THE *STEPS* LEADING TO--THE *KREE!*

QUICKLY!! WE MUST ENTER THE VAULT *BELOW*-- BEFORE IT IS *SEALED* AGAIN-- *FOREVER!*

THUS, SECONDS LATER...

WHAT KINDA PLACE *IS* THIS?? NOTHIN' MAKES ANY *SENSE!!*

IT'S JUST LIKE A LOTTA CRAZY *JUNK!* I DON'T *LIKE* IT, PROFESSOR! MAYBE WE OUGHTTA START HEADIN' *BACK!*

HEAD BACK?? WHEN WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF THE *GREATEST DISCOVERY* OF THE AGES?!!!

DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE *LOOKING* AT, MAN??

WE ARE WALKING WHERE *HUMANS* NEVER BEFORE HAVE TROD-- VIEWING ARTIFACTS THAT WERE NEVER MADE ON *EARTH!*

SUDDENLY, THE TWO AWE-STRICKEN INTRUDERS FIND THEMSELVES WITHIN A GIGANTIC *CAVERN*, SUCH AS NO MORTAL MEN HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE--!

I DON'T *GET* IT! WHAT'S *THIS?* WHERE ARE WE *NOW?*

INCREDIBLE AS IT MAY SEEM, WE ARE STANDING UPON THE SITE OF A *SPACE-PORT!*

ONE THAT WAS ALREADY *OLD* WHEN THE HUMAN RACE WAS MERELY ENTERING ITS *INFANCY!*

THEN--THESE ARE THE RUINS OF ANCIENT *SPACE SHIPS?* YEAH, YOU'RE *RIGHT!* I CAN *SEE* IT NOW!

BUT--WHERE'D THEY *COME* FROM?? WHOSE *WERE* THEY??

THEY BELONGED TO THAT MYSTERIOUS, LONG-DEAD RACE KNOWN ONLY AS--THE *KREE!*

THERE'S SOMETHIN' *ALIVE* THERE--IN THE *SHADOWS!!* --IT'S COMIN' *TOWARDS* US!!

KRAK

WAIT! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT ARE YOU *DOING--?*

LOOK--LOOK AT THE *SIZE* OF IT--!! IT'S A *MONSTER!!*

I AM *INTER-GALACTIC SENTRY 459!* MY MISSION IS TO *PROTECT* THIS BASE--AS I HAVE DONE FOR UNCOUNTABLE MILLENNIUMS!

I CANNOT BE *HARMED*--I CANNOT BE DETERRED FROM MY PURPOSE--FOR, I AM--A *SENTRY!*

NOW, I MUST ACT UNDER THE IRREVOCABLE ORDERS OF MY SUPREME MASTERS, THE *KREE*--

IT IS THEIR COMMAND THAT *NO OUTSIDERS* ENTER THIS BASE--HENCE, YOU MUST BE *IMPRISONED* WITHIN A SHIMMERING MASS OF *COLLODIAL ATOMS!*

CONFUSING ENOUGH FOR YOU? JUST WAIT--THIS IS ONLY THE *BEGINNING!* ANYWAY, LET'S HEAD BACK TO *FF* HEADQUARTERS AND GET OUR SHOW ON THE ROAD--

YOU PICK A SPOT, BEN, WHILE *I* CALL THE AIRLINES!

NAH! I *COULD* FLIP ME A *COIN*--BUT I'M *BROKE* RIGHT NOW!

SAY! HOLD ON, BIG FELLA! IS THAT THE MOST *SCIENTIFIC* METHOD YOU CAN THINK OF?

WELL, HERE GOES *NOTHIN'!!!*

WHATEVER PLACE THE *DART* LANDS-- *THAT'S* WHERE WE'LL GO 'N GIVE THE *NATIVES* A THRILL!

WHAT? YOU'VE NO SEATS AT *ALL*--FOR *ANY* OUTGOING FLIGHTS? YES, I *KNOW* IT'S THE BUSY SEASON, BUT--!

THEY HUNG UP! IT'S THE SAME AT EVERY AIR-LINE-- *ALL BOOKED UP!*

WELL, WADDAYA KNOW! I LANDED IN THE *SOUTH PACIFIC!*

GOOD THING I STILL GOT MY *HULA HOOP!*

TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T GET SOME PLACE THAT'S *NEARER!* THE AIRLINES ARE BOOKED SOLID--ESPECIALLY ON *OVER-SEAS* FLIGHTS!

BUT, I DON'T WANT TO *DISAPPOINT* ANY OF THE OTHERS!

REED, I JUST SPOKE TO *JOHNNY!* HE AND *CRYSTAL* WOULD PREFER TO REMAIN IN *NEW YORK!* THEY REALLY HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO BE ALONE SINCE THEY *FOUND* EACH OTHER AGAIN!

AND *TRITON* SAYS *HE'D* BETTER REMAIN, ALSO--TO LOOK AFTER *LOCKJAW* WHILE CRYSTAL AND JOHNNY ARE DATING!

THAT LEAVES JUST THE *THREE* OF US, THEN!

MEBBE *I* BETTER CUT OUT, ALSO! YOU TWO DON'T HAVETA PLAY NURSEMAID TO *ME!*

NONSENSE, BEN! WITH *ALICIA* OUT OF TOWN, YOU'D ONLY GET IN *TROUBLE* WITHOUT US! BESIDES, YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS VACATION AS EAGERLY AS A *KID!*

THE ONLY PROBLEM IS--I WANTED SUE TO RELAX ON A *JET LINER,* BUT WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE OUR *POGO PLANE,* INSTEAD!

SHE'LL *RELAX* ALRIGHT, STRETCHO!

YOU'LL *TALK* 'ER TO DEATH BEFORE WE'RE HALF-WAY THERE!

THUS, A FEW MINUTES LATER, AS THE *FF's* FAMOUS *POGO PLANE* GETS ITS FINAL CHECKOUT--

I WISH YOU A MOST PLEASANT VACATION, MRS. RICHARDS!

THANK YOU, TRITON!

I APPRECIATE YOUR HELPING US WITH OUR *LUGGAGE!*

DON'T WORRY ABOUT *US,* SIS! YOU JUST GO AND *ENJOY* YOURSELF-- YOU'VE SURE *EARNED* IT!

SOMEONE TELL *BEN* WE'RE READY TO TAKE OFF!

HE'S JUST FINISHING A NOTE TO *ALICIA,* MR. RICHARDS! HE'LL BE RIGHT THERE!

AND THEN, AT LAST--

OL' BLUE-EYED *BENJAMIN'LL* HANDLE THE CONTROLS, SO'S YOU KIDS CAN HOLD HANDS BACK THERE!

THAT IS, IF YA CAN GIT STRETCHO TO STOP SWALLOWIN' *ENCYCLOPEDIAS* LONG ENUFF!

I DIDN'T EVEN LET HIM BRING A *NEWSPAPER* THIS TRIP, BEN!

HAVE *FUN,* GROUP! SEE YOU IN A FEW DAYS!

DON'T RUSH ON *OUR* ACCOUNT, BROTHER-IN-LAW!

I'LL ACTIVATE OUR *SLIDING ROOF,* AS SOON AS YOU SIGNAL FOR CLEARANCE!

HAVE YOURSELVES A *BLAST,* PARTNER!

AND SO, THE UNIQUELY POWERFUL *POGO PLANE* ZOOMS UPWARD, STRAIGHT FOR THE EDGE OF SPACE FROM WHICH IT WILL *GLIDE* DOWN AGAIN, HALFWAY ACROSS THE GLOBE--

SHOOM

OKAY, BEN-- WE'VE REACHED OUR *PIVOTAL POINT*--SO *LET 'ER GO!*

SHEEESH! ONE THING THAT REALLY *BUGS* ME IS A BACK-SEAT *POGO* DRIVER!

WHILE, MANY MILES BELOW, AS THE SPEEDING PLANE PLUMMETS DOWNWARD--

SINCE THE INTRUDERS HAVE *AWAKENED* ME FROM MY SLEEP OF AGES--I MUST FOLLOW MY PRESCRIBED *RITUAL!*

I MUST POSITION THE UNFAILING *VIBRO-SCREEN*-- IN CASE *OTHERS* MAY FOLLOW!

IT IS *DONE!* NOW, ANY *OTHERS* WHO DARE INTRUDE WILL BE HURLED TO THEIR *DOOM* BY A BLANKET OF UNSEEN *VIBRATIONS* WITH WHICH I HAVE *COVERED* THE ISLE!

CLICK!

SINCE THE *VIBRO-SCREEN* IS COMPOSED OF THE *KREE* COLOR SPECTRUM, IT WILL BE TOTALLY INVISIBLE TO *HUMAN* EYES--UNTIL IT IS *TOO LATE!*

OKAY, FRANTIC ONE--OUR STAGE IS SET--OUR CAST ASSEMBLED--OUR PROLOGUE ENDED--SO WHAT ARE WE *WAITING* FOR--?

HERE WE *ARE,* KIDDIES! THIS IS THE LITTLE HUNK'A HEAVEN OL' BLUE-EYED BENJAMIN PICKED FER US!

HEADS UP--BOTH OF YOU! I DON'T LIKE WHAT I *SEE--!*

IT LOOKS SO *LOVELY,* BEN--SO QUIET AND *RESTFUL!*

SOMETHING'S REGISTERING ON THE *INSTRUMENT PANEL--!*

--SOMETHING STRANGELY *OMINOUS!*

LET *ME* HAVE THOSE *CONTROLS*, BEN!

HOLD ON TO *SUE*--WE'RE IN TROUBLE--*BIG* TROUBLE!!

WE'RE STRIKING SOME SORT OF INVISIBLE *VIBRATION FIELD*--IT'S TRYING TO SHAKE THE PLANE TO *PIECES!*

IT'S TOO LATE TO *STOP*--BUT IF WE *CONTINUE*--WE'RE *DONE FOR!*

YA SUMMED IT UP LIKE A LIVIN' *DOLL*, MISTER!! *NOW* TELL US WHAT TO *DO* ABOUT IT!!

QUICK!! INTO YOUR *'CHUTES!!* I'LL HOLD ONTO THE CONTROLS AS LONG AS POSSIBLE! DON'T JUST *SIT* THERE, BEN--*MOVE!*

NUTS! YOU AINT THE *ONLY* CORNBALL *HERO* ON THIS TEAM! *YOU* BAIL OUT WITH SUSIE--

NO! NONE OF US MUST SACRIFICE OURSELVES!

WE'VE ALL *FORGOTTEN* THE ONE THING THAT MAY *SAVE* US--!

OF *COURSE*, HONEY!! YOUR INVISIBLE *FORCE FIELD!!*

IT CAN ACT AS A *BUFFER*--SHIELDING THE PLANE FROM THE DEADLY *VIBRATIONS!*

BUT, EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE *SAVED* THE SHIP--I CAN'T SET HER DOWN *VERTICALLY* INSIDE YOUR FORCE FIELD!

WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE OUR CHANCES ON A *HORIZONTAL* LANDING--!

BUT--THE SHIP WASN'T *BUILT* FOR HORIZONTAL LANDING! SHE'S DESIGNED TO COME DOWN ON HER UPRIGHT *TAKEOFF FINS*--!!

I *KNOW* IT, DARLING--BUT WE HAVEN'T ANY *CHOICE!* I CAN'T STRAIGHTEN HER OUT WITH YOUR *FORCE FIELD* AROUND US--

DON'T WORRY ABOUT *SUSIE*, PAL--I'LL CUSHION 'ER IN MY *ARMS!* SHE'LL BE OKAY!

JUST STAY *WITH* IT, MISTER--STAY *WITH* IT!

AND YOU DON'T DARE *REMOVE* THE FIELD--EVEN FOR A *SECOND!*

SO *STAND BY*--PREPARE FOR *CRASH LANDING!*

LOOK!! ON THE *GROUND*--JUST AHEAD OF US!! A *GIGANTIC* STATUE!

NO! HE'S *NOT* A STATUE!! HE *MOVED!!*

WHAT IS *THIS?!?*

WONDER OF WONDERS! AN AIRCRAFT HAS ***PENETRATED*** THE ALL-POWERFUL ***VIBRO SCREEN!***

I MUST ***CAPTURE*** THE SHIP IN ORDER TO LEARN WHAT MANNER OF ***BEINGS*** IT MAY CONTAIN-- BEINGS WHO POSSESS THE ABILITY TO OVER-COME A WEAPON OF THE ***KREE!***

THE CONTROLS ARE *JAMMED!!* I'M HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE *FIGURE*--AS THOUGH--HE'S ACTUALLY *WILLING* ME--TO *STRIKE* HIM!!

LOOK AT THE *SIZE* OF HIM!! HE'S AT LEAST *FIFTEEN FEET TALL!*

BUT--IF HE *CAN* MOVE--WHY DOES HE *STAND* THERE?? WHY DOESN'T HE RUN FOR *COVER?*

A SPLIT SECOND LATER, THE AWESTRICKEN ADVENTURERS *HAVE* THEIR ANSWER--!

HE--DUCKED *UNDER*--AND THEN--*CAUGHT* US--LIKE A *TOY!!*

I HAVE IT!

THWAK!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE *UP* AGAINST, BEN--BUT LET'S *FIND OUT!*

I ORDER YOU TO--*HALT!!*

I AM A *SENTRY!* IT IS MY DUTY TO *GUARD!*

THIS AREA HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS A *SPACE PORT,* TO BE USED ONLY BY THE *KREE* RACE!

THUS, YOU ARE *INVADERS*--AND, AS SUCH, IT IS MY DUTY TO *REPEL* YOU--IN THE NAME OF THE *KREE* RACE!

OKAY, BUTTERCUP--YA *MADE* YER POINT! NOW LEGGO THAT SHIP OR I'LL *DEMOLISH* YA--IN THE NAME'A MY EVER-LOVIN' *AUNT PETUNIA!*

UH OH!! THERE'S SOMETHIN' *OPENING*--IN HIS *CHEST!!*

HEADS UP, STRETCHO!! IT'S SOME KINDA *BLAST RAY!!*

STAY BACK, BEN! *I* KNOW HOW TO *HANDLE* THIS--!

ZOK!

BY WRAPPING MYSELF AROUND HIS *CHEST,* I'LL BLOCK ANY *FURTHER* BEAMS FROM THAT *RAY* OF HIS!

MOST *IMPRESSIVE!* THIS ALIEN WORLD HAS SPAWNED A STRANGE *NEW* TYPE OF BEINGS SINCE MY LAST AWAKENING!

DON'T COVER *ALL* OF 'IM UP, LOVER BOY!! LEAVE SOMETHIN' SHOWIN' FER ME TO *ZERO IN* ON--!

BUT, BEFORE THE ORANGE-SKINNED POWERHOUSE CAN REACH HIS TARGET--

=UNHHH!= HE'S STRONGER THAN I *THOUGHT!*

HE WRENCHED ME *LOOSE*--BY INCREASING THE PRESSURE OF HIS HIGH-VELOCITY *CHEST WEAPON!* CAN'T--HANG ON--ANY LONGER--!

THIS IS THE LAST TIME YA'LL USE *THAT* NUTTY GIZMO, SWEETPEA!

THAT'LL STOP 'IM! WITH HIS *CONTROL PANEL* BUSTED UP, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO---=*HEY!*= I DON'T *GET* IT--!

YOUR KEY *WORDS* ARE UN-TRANSLATABLE--BUT I GRASP YOUR *MEANING!* I AM NO MERE *ROBOT*--

HOW COME YER STILL *MOVIN'?* I THOUGHT IF YA TEAR UP A ROBOT'S LITTLE *PINWHEELS,* IT PUTS THE *KIBOSH* ON 'IM!

I DON'T CARE *WHAT* YA ARE--!

THE ONLY THING THAT GRABS *ME* IS--

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

LOOK, BUSTER-- WHEN I BELT A GUY, I EXPECT 'IM TO STAY BELTED!!

YA TRYIN' TO GIMME A COMPLEX, OR SOMETHIN'??

YOU HAVE SHATTERED MY INSTRUMENTATION!! NOW, I MUST RELY ON MERE STRENGTH ALONE!

IT IS TRULY BEYOND BELIEF!!

NO LIVING BEING HAS EVER TOPPLED A SENTRY BEFORE!

YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED ME INCORRECTLY! I AM NO ROBOT!!

I AM A LIVING SENTRY-- SPECIALLY CREATED, BRED, AND TRAINED BY THE SUPREME KREE--FOR THE PURPOSE OF GUARD-ING THEIR FAR-FLUNG GALACTIC EMPIRE!

UHHH!

I CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED --FOR, IF I FACE A FOE MORE POWERFUL THAN I, I MERELY INCREASE MY STRENGTH UNTIL I ALONE AM THE MASTER!

ALTHOUGH, NEVER BEFORE WITHIN MY MILLENIA-SPANNING MEMORY HAS IT BEEN NECESSARY TO INCREASE MY STRENGTH AS MUCH AS NOW!

REMEMBER --I BEAR YOU NO MALICE!

I MERELY DO WHAT I WAS TRAINED TO DO-- WHAT I HAVE BEEN BRED TO DO!

A SENTRY MAY NOT THINK! A SENTRY MAY NOT QUESTION! A SENTRY MUST ONLY OBEY!

AND, MY ORDERS ARE--NOW, AS THEY WERE THEN...

GUARD THE KREE SPACEPORT-- AND DESTROY ALL INVADERS!

REED!! LOOK--! THE SENTRY-- HE'S DROWNING BEN!

NO!! I'VE GOT TO GO TO HIM-- HELP HIM!! NO MATTER WHAT THE COST--!

SUE--GET TO THE PLANE--USE THE SATELLITE TV TO CONTACT THE TORCH! TELL HIM TO GET HERE-- EVERY SECOND COUNTS!

I WILL, DARLING! BUT--WHAT ABOUT YOU? SHOULDN'T I HELP YOU FIRST?

JUST DO AS I TOLD YOU, GIRL! AND DON'T QUESTION MY ORDERS!

THIS ISN'T YOUR HUSBAND TALKING--

IF THE THING WAS POWERLESS AGAINST THAT CREATURE-- WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SAVE HIM?

IT'S MR. FANTASTIC-- THE LEADER OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST TEAM--!

AND, WHEN THE HEADLINE WRITERS FROM COAST-TO-COAST PINNED THAT NAME ON ME--

THEY WEREN'T JUST WHISTLIN' DIXIE!

HANG ON, BEN! I'M ON MY WAY TO YOU, FELLA-- JUST HANG ON!

SPANG!

OKAY, SENTRY--OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE CALLED--!

WE DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS FIGHT--BUT NO ONE PUTS THE F.F. DOWN WHILE ANY ONE OF US IS STILL ALIVE!!

DON'T BOTHER TURNING NOW--THERE WON'T BE TIME FOR YOU TO SAVE YOURSELF FROM ME!!

AND IF YOU'RE *STILL* NOT READING ME, MAYBE *THIS* WILL GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS!!

I'VE GOT TO WRAP MYSELF AROUND HIM-- TIGHTER--*TIGHTER*-- TILL HE FALLS *BACK*--

--BACK INTO THE *SEA*!!

I *DID* IT! IT'LL TAKE HIM A FEW MINUTES TO *RIGHT* HIMSELF AGAIN--

AND THOSE MINUTES SHOULD GIVE ME TIME TO FIND WHERE HE DROPPED *BEN*!!

THERE HE IS *NOW*-- BUT--HE'S SO *MOTIONLESS* --SO *STILL*--!

I'VE GOT TO *REACH* HIM--GET HIM TO THE SURFACE--*FAST*!!

IN THE NAME OF *HEAVEN*-- I HOPE--I'M NOT-- *TOO LATE*!!

MEANWHILE, HALFWAY AROUND THIS CAPRICIOUS, CALAMITOUS, CRAZILY-SPINNING OLD GLOBE OF OURS--

IT WAS GOOD OF **JOHNNY STORM** TO TEACH ME TO RIDE HIS **JET CYCLE!**

NOW I CAN STUDY THE CITY BELOW ME WITHOUT **MYSELF** BEING THE SUBJECT OF CURIOUS STARES AT EVERY TURN!

STORM IS A **WORTHY** YOUTH--ELSE, THE LOVELY **CRYSTAL** WOULD NOT HAVE LOST HER HEART TO HIM!

AND, WHAT OF THAT *"WORTHY YOUTH"* AND THE FASCINATING FEMALE WHOSE LOVE HE HAS WON--?

TRITON'S DOING FINE ON HIS FIRST **SOLO,** CRYS!

SO I GUESS WE CAN **BREAK CONTACT** FOR A WHILE, HUH?

DO YOU **REALIZE,** JOHNNY, THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME--IN ALL THOSE LONG MONTHS SINCE WE MET --THAT WE HAVE BEEN --**ALONE?**

AS A MATTER OF FACT--THAT THOUGHT **DID** KINDA CROSS MY MIND!

CLICK!

CRYS--THERE'S SO MUCH I WANT TO **SAY** TO YOU! SO MANY THINGS I WANT YOU TO **KNOW**--!

SOMETIMES, JOHNNY--A GIRL MANAGES TO KNOW **ALL** THOSE THINGS --WITHOUT A SINGLE WORD --EVER BEING SAID--!

SLURP!

HEY!! WHA-?!!

OH DEAR --IT'S **LOCKJAW!!**

I THINK HE'S TRYING TO **TELL** US SOMETHING, JOHNNY!

YOU UNMENTIONABLE, UNMITIGATED, UNROMANTIC, FOUR-LEGGED *FOUL BALL!!*

IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO *SAY*, WRITE US A *LETTER* NEXT TIME--!

WAIT, JOHNNY! *THIS* MUST BE WHY LOCKJAW WANTED TO *ALERT* YOU--!

THERE IS SOMETHING COMING IN ON YOUR *VIDIO-SCANNER!*

KA-THAK KA-THAK KA-THAK

SUE!! WHAT *IS* IT, SIS?? WHAT'S *WRONG?*

OH--AT *LAST!!* THANK HEAVEN I *REACHED* YOU! WE *NEED* YOU, JOHNNY! WE NEED YOU *DESPERATELY!*

WHAT *HAPPENED??* WHERE *ARE* YOU??

IN THE *SOUTH PACIFIC*--ON THE ISLE THAT BEN PICKED, AT RANDOM!

THERE'S SOME TERRIBLE *DANGER* HERE--NO TIME TO *DESCRIBE* IT! PERHAPS--YOUR *FLAME* CAN SUCCEED--WHERE *WE'VE* FAILED!

YOU *HEARD* HER, CRYS! I CAN'T WASTE ANOTHER *SECOND!*

NO, JOHNNY! THERE'S A *FASTER* WAY! HAVE YOU *FORGOTTEN?*

STAY *HERE*, HONEY--*TRITON* WILL LOOK AFTER YOU! I'VE GOT TO PREPARE REED'S ONE-MAN *MISSILE!*

LOCKJAW!! HE CAN TAKE YOU ANYPLACE ON EARTH--AS FAST AS A *THOUGHT!*

OF *COURSE!!* I SHOULD HAVE *REMEMBERED!*

LET'S *GO*, BOY! WE'VE GOT A *JOB* TO DO!

DON'T JUST LAY THERE *YAWNING*, YOU OVERSIZED, WET-NOSED, WALKIN' *SLEEPING PILL!*

NOT LIKE *THAT*, JOHNNY! YOU'RE *UPSETTING* HIM! LET *ME* DO IT!

BUT, IF WE REMAIN WITH JOHNNY AND CRYS MUCH LONGER, WE'RE APT TO MISS THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BATTLE WITH THE ***SENTRY***-- SO, IT'S ***SCENE-CHANGING TIME*** ONCE MORE--

SUE! BEN IS STILL ***ALIVE***--BUT HE'S ***UNCONSCIOUS!***--DID YOU REACH ***JOHNNY?*** IS HE ON THE WAY?

WHAT ***IS*** IT, DARLING? WHY DO YOU ***LOOK*** LIKE THAT--?

BEHIND YOU, REED! IT'S THE ***SENTRY!!*** HE'S ALMOST ON ***TOP*** OF YOU!!

THERE'S NO TIME FOR ***YOU*** TO MOVE--IT'S LUCKY I REACHED HERE WHEN I ***DID!***

EVERYTHING IS UP TO ***ME*** NOW!

NOW, WHEN THE INVADERS ARE ALL TOGETHER--I CAN DESTROY YOU ***ALL!***

BUT--WHAT ***NEW*** ALIEN ENCHANTMENT IS ***THIS?*** ONLY THE ***FEMALE*** REMAINS! THE OTHERS HAVE ***VANISHED!***

THAT'S ***IT,*** REED! ***RUN!*** RUN FOR SAFETY--WHILE I SHIELD YOU WITH MY INVISIBLE ***FORCE SCREEN!***

SO! IN SOME MANNER YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO BEND--AND TO ALTER ***LIGHT WAVES!*** BUT, IT CANNOT SAVE ANY OF YOUR LIVES!

WHY MUST YOU ***FIGHT*** US? WE MEAN NO HARM! IF YOU ARE ***STRANDED*** HERE--PERHAPS WE CAN ***HELP*** YOU--!

I AM A ***SENTRY!*** I CAN ONLY OBEY ***ORDERS!*** MY ORDERS ARE--***DESTROY!***

IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER I CAN ***SEE*** MY VICTIMS OR NOT!

WITH BUT ***ONE*** BLOW, I WILL WASH THIS ISLAND ***CLEAN*** OF THEM ***ALL!***

THOMB

HE CAUSED A MONSTROUS ***TIDAL WAVE!!*** IT'S ABOUT TO ***INUNDATE*** THE ENTIRE ***ISLE!***

THERE'S NO PLACE TO ***HIDE!!*** NO PLACE TO GIVE US ***SHELTER!***

REED! IT'S ALMOST ON TOP OF US! WHAT CAN WE DO??

IT'S A HUNDRED FEET HIGH! EVEN YOUR FORCE FIELD COULDN'T WITHSTAND THE IMPACT OF SUCH A BLOW!

I'LL STRETCH MY BODY-- TO THE FULLEST!! IF YOU BOTH GET BEHIND ME-- PERHAPS-- IN SOME WAY-- BY SOME MIRACLE--!

I FEEL MY STRENGTH COMIN' BACK--AT LAST!

BUT--THIS IS ONE TIME--I'M JUST AS HELPLESS-- AS ANY CRUMMY YANCY STREETER!

LOOK! THAT BLAZE OF LIGHT--NEAR THE POGO PLANE! IT--IT'S--

IT'S JOHNNY!! WITH LOCK-JAW!! CRYSTAL'S DOG BROUGHT HIM HERE--USING ITS INTER-DIMENSIONAL-SPANNING-POWER!!

BUT--EVEN THE HUMAN TORCH CAN'T FIGHT A GIANT TIDAL WAVE!!

DON'T BET ON THAT, SUSIE! JUST WATCH THE KID GO--!

HE'S BURNING A DEEP TRENCH-- ALL ALONG THE SHORE-LINE--!

LOOK, SUE-- HE DID IT! THE TRENCH SAVED OUR LIVES!

ZZZ

IF YOU'RE AIMIN' TO *SWAT* ME WITH THAT THING, YOU'LL HAVETA BE A LOT FASTER THAN *THAT,* BIG MAN!

SHOOOSH

NEVER *BEFORE* HAVE I BATTLED SUCH STRANGE CREATURES-- WITHOUT THE AID OF MY *INSTRUMENTS!*

BUT, I MUST *IMPROVISE*-- I MUST CREATE MY *OWN* WEAPONS AS THE OCCASION DEMANDS!

FASHIONING THE *SAND* BENEATH MY FEET INTO A GIANT *MOUND* MAY WELL SERVE THE PURPOSE!

BETTER LUCK *NEXT* TIME, FELLA!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH PRACTICE BATTLING THE *SANDMAN** TO BE ABLE TO DODGE *ANY* AMOUNT OF SAND THAT *ANYONE* CAN TOSS AT ME!

SISSSSSST!

*IF YOU DON'T REMEMBER, *SHAME* ON YOU! IT WAS JUST A FEW ISSUES AGO! --SCORE-KEEPER STAN.

WHOEVER THAT JOKER *IS,* HE'S TOO *DANGEROUS* TO TAKE ANY *CHANCES* WITH--!

I'LL KEEP HIM ON THE *RUN* WITH SOME BEAMS OF *MULTIPLE LASER* INTENSITY!

NOW WHAT? I MISSED MY FIFTEEN-FOOT *TARGET,* BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I *HIT* SOMETHING UNDER THE *GROUND!*

WHAM

BTOOM!

HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE? THE BLASTED ISLAND'S TEARIN' ITSELF APART!!

RUN!! KEEP RUNNING-- WHILE I EXPLAIN--!

THIS ISLE WAS ONCE RULED BY SOME POWERFUL, ALIEN RACE-- CALLED THE KREE!

THEY OBVIOUSLY KEPT THEIR MAIN ENERGY AND POWER SUPPLY BENEATH THE EARTH--WHERE IT HAS REMAINED FOR ALL THESE AGES!

NOW, JOHNNY'S FLAME MANAGED TO REACH IT-- SETTING OFF THE MAIN ENGINE!!

WITHIN A SHORT TIME, THIS WHOLE ISLAND IS LIKELY TO BE BLOWN SKY HIGH!

AND, OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO GRAB LOCKJAW-- AND HAVE HIM GET US OUT OF HERE IN TIME!

HOLD IT, SUE! A CREVICE JUST OPENED--BEN IS FALLING THRU--!

DON'T STOP FOR ME, STRETCHO! KEEP GOIN', YA HEAR? THERE'S SUE AND OL' MATCHHEAD TO TAKE CARE OF!

FORGET IT, BEN! WE'RE ALL GETTING OUT TOGETHER!

WELL, FER YOUR SAKE, I HOPE I BOUNCE WHEN I HIT BOTTOM!

THOONK!

HEY, FER THE LUVVA MIKE--!

HELP!! GET US OUT OF HERE!! WE'RE TRAPPED!

LOOK! OUR PRAYERS-- THEY HAVE BEEN ANSWERED!

SIT TIGHT, GENTS! I'LL HAVE YA SKIPPIN' AROUND IN THE FRESH AIR IN NO TIME!

BEN--HURRY! THE ISLAND WILL BE BLOWING UP IN ANOTHER FEW MINUTES!!

YEAH! YEAH! I'M COMIN'-- I'M COMIN'!!

KRUNCH!

SECONDS LATER, AFTER THE PROFESSOR AND HIS GUIDE HAVE HASTILY EXPLAINED--

NOW IT ALL TIES IN! IT WAS THE PROFESSOR'S EXPLORATION THAT BROUGHT THE SENTRY TO LIFE AGAIN--

WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME! THE ISLAND IS SHUDDERING, MORE VIOLENTLY THAN BEFORE!!

NOW AINT THAT JUST GINGER-PEACHY! AN' I THOUGHT IT WUZ SOMETHIN' HE ATE!

IT CAN'T BLOW UP NOW! THERE'S SO MUCH TO LEARN!

IF ONLY THE SENTRY HAD NOT AWAKENED!

MOVE IT! WE GOTTA STAND NEAR LOCKJAW SO'S HE CAN GIT THE WHOLE KIT 'N KABOODLE OF US OUTTA HERE BEFORE THE FIREWORKS START!

BUT WE CAN'T LET ALL THIS PRICELESS EVIDENCE OF AN ALIEN RACE GO UP IN SMOKE!

IT'S BETTER THAN KEEPIN' IT COMPANY, PAL! NOW C'MON-- IF THAT MUTT TAKES OFF WITHOUT US, WE'RE COOKED!

BUT, WHAT OF THE SENTRY! IF WE COULD JUST TAKE HIM BACK--

HE'S THE ONLY LIVING PROOF OF THE KREE'S EXISTENCE ON EARTH!

IT'S TOO LATE! TOO LATE FOR ANYTHING! --LOCKJAW IS TAKING US HOME NOW!!

LOOK--THERE'S THE SENTRY NOW--JUST STANDING THERE!

THEY ARE GONE! FOR THE FIRST TIME--A SENTRY HAS FAILED!

AND NOW, WITH DESTRUCTION ALL ABOUT ME-- I MUST PAY THE PENALTY!

I HAVE NOT SEEN, NOR HEARD FROM THE KREE FOR UNTOLD AGES!

PERHAPS THE SUPREME RACE IS LONG SINCE DEAD--OR, PERHAPS THEY ARE JUST DEPARTED--TO RETURN AGAIN--SOME DAY--!

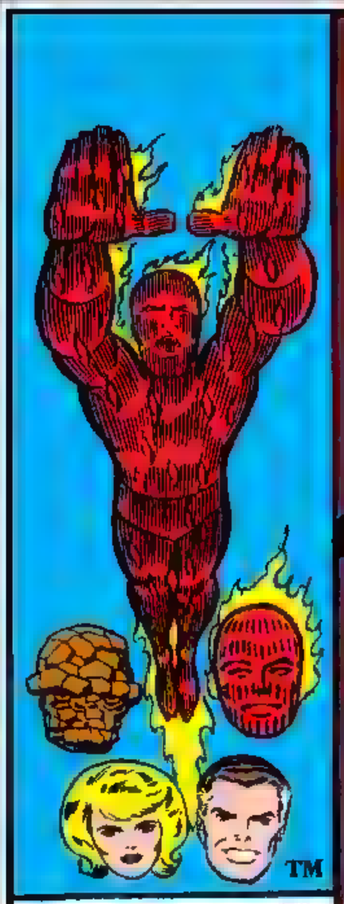
THIS IS SENTRY 459, MAKING HIS FINAL REPORT!

OUTPOST TEN WILL SOON BE DESTROYED--

BUT, I REMAIN AT MY POST-- AS A SENTRY MUST--

--UNTIL-- THE END--!

NEXT: The MYSTERY of ALICIA!



THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

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FROM THE DEADLY LIPS OF.. RONAN:

"I ACCUSE!"

THE FABULOUS F.F. AND ALL MANKIND, FACE MENACE ANEW...

"...FROM BEYOND THIS PLANET EARTH!"

INTRODUCING IN THIS ISSUE... THE MYSTERY OF ALICIA!

WHAT IS *REAL*--AND WHAT IS *UNREAL*? SOMETIMES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO TRULY KNOW! FOR EXAMPLE, TAKE THIS STARTLING SCENE--

NOW, GET THEE HENCE, O TRUE BELIEVER, FOR SPECTACLE MOST CEREBRAL DOTH SURELY AWAIT THEE...!

CONCEIVED AND CREATED BY THE COLOSSALLY CELEBRATED COMBO OF:
STAN (THE MAN) LEE and JACK (KING) KIRBY

EMBELLISHED BY: JOE SINNOTT

LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK

YOU, WHO HAVE BEEN ASLEEP-- *HEED MY WORDS!*

I AM SPEAKING TO YOU IN THE MOST *DIRECT* MANNER POSSIBLE!

--THRU YOUR OWN, MORTAL *BRAINS!*

MY *NAME* WOULD BE UTTERLY *MEANING-LESS* TO YOU--

--BUT I AM THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF *POWER*--FOR I AM THE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE* OF THE MAJESTIC RACE OF THE *KREE!*

BY PIECING TOGETHER THE FRAIL FABRIC OF THE *PAST*, I HAVE LEARNED IT WAS *YOU* WHO DESTROYED MY HIDDEN *EARTH OUTPOST*, AND ITS LOYAL *SENTRY!**

*THIS IS OUR WAY OF FINDING OUT IF YOU WERE WITH US LAST ISH--'CAUSE THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENED, BABY! --*SWINGIN' STAN.*

WHILE YOU WRITHE IN ABJECT *HELPLESS-NESS*, I HAVE PROBED YOUR PRIMITIVE *BRAINS!*

AND NOW--I AM *DONE!*

SINCE THERE IS NO DOUBT OF YOUR *GUILT*, YOU MUST AWAIT MY *SENTENCE!*

THUS, I *RELEASE* YOU--UNTIL THE COMING OF--*RONAN, THE ACCUSER!*

A SPLIT-SECOND LATER...

BRO-*THER!* I'VE HAD NIGHTMARES *BEFORE*--BUT *THIS* ONE WAS *TOO MUCH!*

WADDA *YOU* KNOW ABOUT NIGHTMARES?

YA SHOULD'A SEEN THE NUTTY ONE *I* JUST HAD!--AND IN LIVIN' *STEREO*, YET!

NEXT TIME, I DON'T CARE *HOW* LATE WE GOTTA WORK--I'M GOIN' *HOME* AND SLEEP IN MY *OWN* TREE!

AND I'M SWEARIN' OFF *PICKLES 'N ICE CREAM*, TOO!

BOY, WOULDN'T IT BE SOMETHING IF THE *SENTRY* WAS LIKE A *COP* WHO HAS TO CALL THE *PRECINCT* EVERY FEW HOURS?

THEN, WHEN THE ISLE *SANK*, AND HE MISSED HIS REPORT, IT *ALERTED* 'EM ON THE *KREE PLANET!*

YEAH, I WAS THINKING THE-- *HEY!!*

Y'MEAN *YOU* HAD THE *SAME* DREAM?!!

I HEARD O' *TOGETHERNESS*, BUT *THIS* IS FER THE *BIRDS!*

IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME KINDA *COINCIDENCE*-- THOUGH *REED'LL* FIND SOME BIG, SCIENTIFIC *NAME* FOR IT!

WELL, I'M NOT WORRYIN' ABOUT ANY *NIGHTMARE* WHEN I'VE GOT A DATE WITH A REAL LIVE *DREAM* TODAY!

I'LL HOP IN HERE *FIRST*, BIG BUDDY! I DON'T WANNA KEEP *CRYS* WAITING!

HEY, WADDAYA DO FER AN *ITCHY TONGUE?*

SCRATCH IT!

WELL, *HARDY HAR HAR!*

WHY CAN'TCHA TAKE A *COLD* BATH, JUNIOR-- SO'S I DON'T HAVETA *WAIT* ALL DAY?

AWW, GO HAUNT A HOUSE, OR SOMETHIN'! I JUST GOT *IN* HERE!

YOU KNOW, BENJY, I CAN'T GET THAT *DREAM* OUT OF MY MIND!

DON'T WORRY-- IT'LL DIE O' *LONELINESS* IN THERE!

HI, STRETCHO! IS *BREAKFAST* READY YET?

IN A FEW MINUTES, BEN!

SUE HAD A BAD *DREAM* --WHICH SORT OF SHOOK HER UP!

HER *TOO?*

CLICK!

IT'S *UNCANNY*, DARLING! I WAS JUST TALKING TO *BEN--*

HE AND JOHNNY *BOTH* HAD THE EXACT SAME DREAM THAT *WE* DID!

BUT--THAT ISN'T *POSSIBLE*, REED!! HOW CAN *FOUR PEOPLE*--SHARE THE *SAME* NIGHTMARE??

YOU MEAN--IT MAY HAVE BEEN *MORE* THAN-- JUST A *DREAM?!!*

THERE'S *ONE* EXPLANATION-- BUT IT'S ALMOST TOO FRIGHTENING TO *MENTION!*

IT MAY HAVE BEEN-- A *SENTENCE OF DEATH!*

IF ONLY *TRITON* WERE STILL HERE!

BEING AN *INHUMAN*, HE'S HAD MORE *EXPERIENCE* WITH PSYCHIC PHENOMENA AND OTHER META-PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS--!

BUT HE AND *LOCKJAW* RETURNED TO THE *CAMP* THE OTHERS HAVE ESTABLISHED!

REED! THEN YOU REALLY *DO* THINK?

I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* TO THINK!

BUT, IF SOMEONE *DOES* HAVE THE POWER --TO SUBJECT US TO A *MIND PROBE*-- FROM SOMEWHERE IN SPACE--BEYOND THE *STARS*--!

THEN, WE DARE NOT CLOSE OUR EYES TO THE APPALLING *DANGER!*

STOP!! DON'T SAY ANY *MORE*--!!

I DON'T *BELIEVE* IT! I *WON'T* BELIEVE IT! I DON'T *WANT* TO BELIEVE IT!

I'M *SICK* OF ADVENTURE-- AND PERIL!! I JUST WANT TO LIVE A *NORMAL* LIFE--!

SUE!

I WANT TO SET UP HOUSEKEEPING AS *MRS. REED RICHARDS*--

I WANT TO BE INVOLVED WITH *SUPER-MARKETS* --INSTEAD OF *SUPER-VILLAINS!*

WAIT! DARLING-- COME *BACK!*

I'M *SICK* OF LIVING IN A RIDICULOUS *COSTUME!*

I'M A *WOMAN!* I WANT FEMININE *DRESSES*-- FOOLISH *HAIR-DOS*--!

DON'T! LET *GO* OF ME!

NOT TILL I'VE HAD MY *SAY!*

LISTEN, YOU LOVELY LITTLE CUPCAKE!

YOU KNOW I'D DO ANY-THING IN THE *WORLD* FOR YOU!

I'D FACE A *MILLION* SUPER-POWERED FOES WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT-- BUT WHEN I SEE *ONE TEAR* IN YOUR GORGEOUS EYES-- IT *DESTROYS* ME!

THEN-- YOU *MEAN*--?

I *MEAN* YOU'RE *RIGHT!*

I'VE BEEN A BLIND, INCONSIDERATE *FOOL*--BUT I'M GOING TO MAKE *UP* FOR IT!

I WANT YOU TO BUY A WHOLE NEW *WARDROBE*--AND THEN YOU AND I WILL *DO THE TOWN* LIKE IT'S NEVER BEEN DONE *BEFORE!*

DARLING-- I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO *SAY*--!

FINE! WIVES SHOULD BE *KISSED*--AND NOT HEARD!

BUT, EVEN AS MR. AND MRS. RICHARDS PROVE THAT *MARRIAGE* IS HERE TO STAY, THE WORST *FEARS* OF THE BRILLIANT *MR. FANTASTIC* ARE ABOUT TO BE SHOCKINGLY *REALIZED*--

THE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE* HAS GIVEN ME MY *ORDERS!*

NOW, ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO *VISIT* THE PRIMEVAL PLANET-- *EARTH!*

ONCE THERE, I SHALL EASILY *LOCATE* THE SO-CALLED *FANTASTIC FOUR!*

THEY SHALL BE FORCED TO ANSWER TO *RONAN, THE PUBLIC ACCUSER*-- AND TO MY *UNIVERSAL WEAPON!*

ALL WHO INHABIT THIS PRIMITIVE GALAXY MUST BE TAUGHT THAT *NONE* MAY DESTROY A *SENTRY* OF THE SUPREME *KREE RACE*--

I HAVE *REACHED* MY DESTI-NATION!

NOW, HAVING ESTABLISHED MY PREARRANGED *ORBIT* AROUND EARTH, I SHALL ENTER THE BASIC *MATTER TRANSMITTER*--

--SO THAT I MAY STEP FORTH, WITHIN ONE *MICRO-SECOND*, UPON THE ALIEN SOIL OF THE PLANET BELOW!

HAD I THE *RIGHT* TO QUESTION A COMMAND OF THE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE*, I WOULD HAVE QUESTIONED THE *NECESSITY* OF THIS MISSION--!

FOR, *EARTH* IS OF NO IMPORTANCE TO THE KREE!

IT LIES FAR BEYOND THE FAINTEST *BACKWASH* OF OUR MOST REMOTE SHIPPING LANES!

INDEED, THE *SENTRY* WHO HAD BEEN STATIONED HERE MANY MILLENNIA BEFORE HAD BEEN ALL BUT *FORGOTTEN*--

UNTIL HIS *DEFEAT* WAS RECORDED UPON OUR AUTOMATIC *SCANNING DETECTORS!*

STILL, MY ORDERS ARE CLEAR--AND THEY *MUST* BE EXECUTED!

FIRST, I SHALL EMIT AN AURA OF *NEGATIVISM*, CAUSING THE NATIVES TO REMAIN *UNAWARE* OF MY PRESENCE AS I *STUDY* THEM AT CLOSE RANGE!

NO LONGER ARE THEY MINDLESS *SAVAGES*! THEY APPEAR TO BE IN THE *SECONDARY* STAGE OF RACIAL ADVANCEMENT!

THEIR *SOCIOLOGICAL STRUCTURE* IS STILL ECONOMICALLY ORIENTED-- AND THEIR *SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES* HAVE FAR OUTDISTANCED THEIR MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS!

IN SHORT, THEY ARE AT THE *INTERMEDIATE* STAGE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT!

THOUGH LEARNING TO MASTER THEIR *PHYSICAL* WORLD, THEY ARE STILL SORELY BESET BY *GREED, HATRED, FEAR,* AND OTHER VIRUSES OF THE *SPIRIT!*

YET, WEAK AND PITIFUL THOUGH THEY MAY BE, *FOUR* OF THEIR NUMBER HAVE DARED DESTROY A *KREE OUTPOST* AND ITS *SENTRY!*

AND FOR *THAT,* THEY MUST ANSWER TO *RONAN,* THE *PUBLIC ACCUSER!*

NOW, ACCORDING TO STANDARD PROCEDURE, I MUST CREATE A *CONE OF INPENETRABILITY* ABOUT MYSELF--

AND, SAFELY *WITHIN* THIS CONE, UNDISTURBED BY ANY HOSTILE HUMANS, I SHALL METE OUT THE *SENTENCE OF THE KREE!*

SINCE *NONE* CAN APPROACH ME, IT IS NO LONGER NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN MY *AURA OF NEGATIVISM!*

HOLY SMOKE!! WHAT'S THAT?!!

WHILE, BACK AT *FF* HEADQUARTERS, WE FIND--

I CAN'T GIT TO SEE *ALICIA* TILL LATER ON, SO I MIGHT AS WELL CATCH UP ON SOME *CULTURE!*

I AINT HADDA CHANCE TO READ *DEAR ABBY* FER DAYS!

WHAT'S THAT? YOU'VE GOT 'ER ALL SET TO *ROLL? GRRRREAT!* I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!

KEEP IT DOWN TO A *ROAR,* WILLYA, PEE-WEE? CAN'TCHA SEE I'M *RELAXIN'?!!*

BOY! WAIT'LL I TELL *CRYS!*

C'MON, SOUR-PUSS--GET OUT FROM UNDER THAT PAPER AND LISTEN TO SOME *REAL* NEWS!

THAT WAS THE *BODY SHOP* CALLING! MY NEW, SOUPED-UP *HOT-ROD* IS ALL *READY* FOR ME!

HOW'S ABOUT GIVING IT A *SHAKEDOWN* BEFORE I PICK UP MY ONE AND ONLY?

YEEOWWTCH! DOUSE THAT NUTTY *FLAME,* YA BLASTED *IDJIT!*

I *TOLDJA* I WUZ TRYIN' TO *RELAX!*

FROM *WHAT,* YOU LAZY *LUMMOX!*

HEY!! WHO YOU CALLIN' A LAZY LUMMOX ??!

MY BLUSHIN', BLUE-EYED BUDDY-- BENJAMIN J. GRIMM--THAT'S WHO!

THAT SINKS IT, SQUIRT!! HERE'S WHERE I PUT A SNUFF-OUT ON YER FLAME, BUT GOOD!

STICKS 'N STONES WILL BREAK MY BONES--!

SO YA DON'T BELIEVE ME, HUH?

WELL, YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT!

HEY! FER THE LUVVA AUNT PETUNIA!!

ALL I TRIED TA DO WUZ CREATE A VACUUM-- LIKE WHEN THEY DOUSE AN OIL WELL FIRE BY SETTIN' OFF A DYNAMITE CHARGE!

WADDAYA FIGGER WENT WRONG?

WE SHOULD GIVE YOU TO THE MEN WITH THE BUTTERFLY NETS WHEN THEY COME AROUND LOOKING FOR SPECIMENS --THAT'S WHAT WENT WRONG!

HOW DO THEY LET A FULL-TIME NUT LIKE YOU RUN LOOSE?!!

CAN I BELIEVE MY SHELL-LIKE EARS?

HE'S TALKIN' LIKE THAT TO ME?

TO ME--WHO'S ALWAYS BEEN HIS EVER-LOVIN' IDOL--HIS FULL-TIME HERO IMAGE?!!

SORRY I CAN'T HELP YOU CLEAN UP THE MESS, LAUGHIN' BOY--

BUT I WOULDN'T WANNA INTERFERE WITH YOUR RELAXING!

I WONDER IF HE'S TRYIN' TA TELL ME SOMETHIN'?

WHILE, IN A FASHIONABLE DRESS SALON, NOT FAR AWAY--

ARE YOU SURE JOHNNY WILL LIKE ME IN THIS OUTFIT, MRS. RICHARDS?

THAT WIDE-EYED BROTHER OF MINE WOULD LIKE YOU IN A BARREL, CRYSTAL!

I WONDER--SHOULD I TAKE THAT--OR ANOTHER PAIR OF THOSE DARLING HIP-HUGGERS?

WHY NOT TAKE BOTH, MADAM?

A WONDERFUL SUGGESTION!

CRYSTAL, DEAR--DON'T YOU THINK *THIS* WOULD GO BEAUTIFULLY WITH--*CRYS?*

BEEP BEEP-A-BEEP-TY BEEP!

OH! THAT'S *JOHNNY!*

I'VE GOT TO *RUN* NOW, MRS. RICHARDS!

HERE I *AM*, HONEY BUG--RIGHT ON THE *BUTTON!*

HOW ABOUT THIS GLITZY NEW *CHARIOT* OF MINE, LADY?

IT'S *DIVINE*, JOHNNY--BUT WHERE'S THE *REST* OF IT?

F4N.Y.

THIS IS THE *WHOLE BIT*, CRYS!

HOP IN--I'LL EXPLAIN WHY A STRIPPED-DOWN *HOT ROD* IS LIKE A *SONNET!*

IT IS *ALWAYS* LIKE A SONNET WHEN I AM WITH *YOU*, JOHNNY!

OH, *MAN!!* IF I WAS ANY *HAPPIER*--I'D HAVE TO BE *TWINS!*

I'LL HEAD FOR THE *PARKWAY*, HONEY--SO THAT I CAN REALLY SHOW YOU HOW THIS BABY BEHAVES!

AND THEN, WE CAN STOP AT THE *CHARCOAL PIT*, FOR DINNER UNDER THE STARS!

F4N.Y.

AND, AS THE TWO LIGHT-HEARTED TEEN-AGERS DRIVE AWAY--

YOUNG LADY, DO YOU BELIEVE IN *LOVE* AT FIRST SIGHT?

INDEED I *DO*, SIR!

HMMMPH! THE BRAZEN THINGS!

SHEN TAK GUE

THEN LET ME CARRY YOUR GOODIES AS I ESCORT YOU THRU TOWN--WHILE YOU DRIVE OTHER MALES *MAAAD!*

YOU KNOW SOMETHING, MR. RICHARDS--I THINK I COULD LEARN TO *ENJOY* THIS SORT OF THING!

A FEW MINUTES LATER--

DARLING! THIS IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE PLACE IN TOWN!

I WAS RATHER HOPING YOU'D NOTICE THAT, YOUNG LADY!

THIS WAY, PLEASE--!

I'LL SHOW YOU TO OUR VERY BEST TABLE!

REED RICHARDS!! THEY'RE TREATING US LIKE ROYALTY! YOU MUST HAVE PREPARED ALL THIS IN ADVANCE!

THINK NOTHING OF IT, PRINCESS!

IT ONLY COST A KING'S RANSOM!

IF I MAY TAKE YOUR ORDER NOW, SIR--?

LOOK! OVER THERE! ISN'T THAT REED RICHARDS AND SUE STORM?

NOT A CHANCE! YOU'D NEVER CATCH THEM IN A PLACE LIKE THIS

BESIDES-- WHENEVER THEY'RE AROUND-- THINGS HAPPEN!

EEEEE

THEY-- VANISHED!

IT-- WAS THEM!

YOU THOUGHT WE'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE ACTION, EH, FRANTIC ONE? WELL, HANG LOOSE, HERO-- WE'RE ALMOST ON OUR WAY--!

HOLD IT UP THERE, BUDDY-- HOLD IT UP!

OH, JOHNNY-- IT'S A POLICE OFFICER!

I KINDA FIGURED IT WASN'T BOBBY KENNEDY!

F4N.Y.

LOOK, OFFICER--I KNOW THIS BABY LOOKS FAST, BUT I WAS WATCHING THE SPEED LIMIT--!

IT'S OKAY, SON-- YOU WEREN'T SPEEDING!

I'VE ORDERS TO GIVE HOT RODS A ROUTINE SAFETY CHECK, THAT'S ALL!

ALTHOUGH YOURS LOOKS IN BETTER SHAPE THAN HALF THE SEDANS THAT GO BARRELLING BY!

SAY! HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU--
-WHA-?!!-

FZZTT!

JOHNNY!!

HE'S GONE!

STAY WITH US NOW, TIGER--ONLY ONE MORE FZZTT TO GO--!

WHO'SAT LEANIN' ON THE BLAMED DOOR-BELL?!!

HOW'M I EVER GONNA GIT THIS JOINT PATCHED UP WHEN--

WELL, WADDAYA KNOW? A PRESENT FER LOVEABLE ME!

ARE Y-YOU BEN GRIMM?

ME? NAWW-- I'M SIMON 'N GARFUNKEL--

BOTH OF 'EM!

NOW GIMME THAT BLASTED THING 'N DON'T ASK ANY MORE BONEHEAD QUESTIONS!

HEY! WAIT A MINNIT! IT'S GOT A YANCY STREET RETURN ADDRESS!!

WHAT'SA BIG IDEA, BUDDY?

L-LOOK, MISTER-- I'M JUST PAID TO DELIVER 'EM--THAT'S ALL!

AND I SUDDENLY REALIZE THEY DON'T PAY ME ENOUGH!

POSTAL UNION

NOW JUST SIGN HERE SO'S I CAN GET OUT OF THIS NUT-HOUSE!

NOT-- SO-- FAST!

ANYTHING THEM CHICKEN-SCRATCHIN' YANCY STREETERS SEND ME IS GOTTA BE BOOBY-TRAPPED!

JUST HOLD YER HOSSES TILL I SEE IF IT TICKS!

TICKS?? YOU THINK-- IT'S A--A--

POSTAL UNION

THEN-- DON'T SHAKE IT!!

FZZTT!

HE WAS RIGHT!!

WE'RE DONE FOR!!

BUT-- THIS IS CRAZY!! I DON'T GET IT!

THE PACKAGE IS OKAY!! IT DIDN'T BLOW UP AT ALL!

BUT GRIMM IS GONE-- JUST THE SAME!!

I'M GETTIN' OUTTA HERE!

IF I HAVETA MAKE ANOTHER DELIVERY TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR, I'M TURNING IN MY UNIFORM!

I'D RATHER BE A CIVILIAN!

AND NOW, THE MOMENT WE'VE BEEN *WAITING* FOR! INSIDE THE UNCANNY *CONE OF INVULNERABILITY*, WE FIND--

I AM *RONAN*, THE *PUBLIC ACCUSER*!

IN THE NAME OF THE *KREE RACE*, THOSE WHOM I *ACCUSE*, I DO *SENTENCE* AS WELL!

YOU STAND ACCUSED OF DESTROYING AN IMPERIAL *KREE OUTPOST*--AND DEPRIVING THE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE* OF AN INVALUABLE *SENTRY*!

THEN--MY SUSPICIONS WERE *CORRECT*!! IT *WASN'T* A DREAM! IT WAS A GENUINE *MIND PROBE*!

WE ONLY ACTED IN *SELF DEFENSE*! YOUR SO-CALLED *SENTRY* WAS TRYING TO POLISH US *OFF*!

HE--LOOKS MORE *POWER-FUL*--THAN THE *SENTRY* HIMSELF!

I'M GITTIN' *FED UP* WITH EVERY CREEP WHO CAN AFFORD A FAR-OUT *COSTUME* THINKIN' HE CAN WHUP THE *FF*!!

I MUST INSIST UPON *SILENCE* DURING THE PERIOD OF *ACCUSATION*!

YOU GOT *ROCKS* IN YER HEAD *AWREADY*--

SO HOW'DJA LIKE SOME *LUMPS* TO KEEP 'EM *COMPANY*?

ARE YOU SO ABYSMALLY *PRIMITIVE* THAT YOU CANNOT RECOGNIZE THE *UNIVERSAL WEAPON* WHICH I HOLD?!!

THIS IS YOUR *FINAL* WARNING!

A *PUBLIC ACCUSER* CAN TOLERATE *NO DISTURBANCE* DURING THE TIME OF TRIAL!

TRIAL?!! YOU AIN'T TRYIN' *US*, BUSTER!

BEN--*DON'T*! WITH THAT *WEAPON* OF HIS, HE MIGHT--;*UHHH*!= *TOO LATE*!

HOLY HANNAH!! WHAT'S *HAPPENIN'*??

CAN--HARDLY *MOVE*! FEELS LIKE--A WHOLE *PLANET*--ON MY *BACK*--CRUSHIN' ME--!!

IT WILL AVAIL YOU *NOTHING* TO STRUGGLE!

THE PRESSURE WILL CONTINUE TO *INCREASE* TILL YOU ARE BEATEN TO YOUR *KNEES!*

BENJAMIN J. GRIMM-- DON'T BEAT-- THAT EASY!! I'LL--GIT TO YA-- *SOMEHOW--!*

NO ONE'S DOIN' THAT TO MY BLUE-EYED BUDDY--!

FLAME ON!

HE--JUST WAVED THAT *CLUB* AT ME-- AND I *MISSED* 'IM!!

SSSSHOOOSH

WHAT MUST I *DO* TO CONVINCE YOU HOW *USELESS* IT IS TO RESIST AN *ACCUSER??!*

MISTER, IF YOU THINK THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* ARE GONNA SIT UP 'N *BEG,* JUST 'CAUSE SOME CLUB-SWINGIN' CLOWN FROM WAY OUT YONDER *SAYS* SO, THEN YOU'RE OUTTA YOUR *TREE!*

AGAIN YOU DARE ATTACK??

THIS TIME I SHALL DRAW THE VERY FLAME *AWAY* FROM YOU--*DRAINING* YOU OF YOUR FIERY POWER!

JOHNNY!

I COMMEND YOU FOR YOUR PRESENCE OF MIND, RICHARDS!

YOU HAVE SAVED YOUR YOUTHFUL COMPANION FROM FALLING THRU USE OF YOUR UNUSUAL STRETCH-ING POWERS!

BUT NOW--YOU STILL TRY TO RESTRAIN A KREE ACCUSER WITH YOUR OTHER ARM?!!

RONAN, I'LL TRY ANYTHING WHERE THE LIVES AND WELFARE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR --AND THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE-- MAY BE AT STAKE!

WHY--CAN'T I-- GIT UP?? THEY NEED ME!! I CAN'T--FAIL 'EM--I CAN'T-- NOT NOW!!

UNNHHH!! HIS CLUB!!

IT--EMITTED --A STUN BLAST!! CAN'T--HOLD ON--!

WE, OF THE KREE RACE, HAVE POWER SO MUCH GREATER THAN YOURS THAT IT MUST SEEM LIKE VIRTUAL MAGIC TO YOU!

EVEN THIS ONE SIMPLE WEAPON I HOLD--IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CREATE AND DESTROY ALL PHYSICAL MATTER --AS I MAY WILL IT!

AND, IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT YOU STILL DOUBT ME--

SUE!! STAND BEHIND ME! WE CAN'T TELL WHAT HE'LL DO NEXT!!

MY DARLING!! I'VE NEVER FELT--SO UTTERLY HELPLESS--!

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US--??

NO NEED FOR ALARM-- YET!!

I MERELY SOUGHT TO DEMONSTRATE MY SUPREMECY --BY TRANSFORMING YOUR STREET CLOTHES INTO YOUR BETTER-KNOWN OFFICIAL UNIFORMS!

HE DID IT-- JUST BY WAVING-- THAT CLUB OF HIS!

YOU MUST NEVER FORGET--A KREE OFFICIAL MUST EVER BE TREATED WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT--AS BEFITS A SUPERIOR BEING!

I'VE NEWS FOR YOU, FRIEND! SUPERIOR BEINGS DON'T HAVE TO BE CONSTANTLY PROVING THEIR SUPERIORITY!

YOUR TONE IS STILL DANGEROUSLY DEFIANT!

I'M JUST TELLING IT LIKE IT IS!

SINCE YOU SEEM *DETERMINED* TO VIOLATE THE APPROVED RULES OF *CONDUCT* FOR THE CONDEMNED...

YOU LEAVE ME *NO* CHOICE--!

I *GOTTA* REACH 'IM!! I JUST *GOTTA* --!!

WITHOUT ANY FURTHER ADO, I SHALL PASS *SENTENCE* UPON YOU--

AND THEN, AS SWIFTLY AS POSSIBLE--YOUR SENTENCE SHALL BE *CARRIED OUT!!*

I'M THEIR ONLY *HOPE!!* I *CAN'T* FAIL 'EM--I *CAN'T!!!*

IT'S THE BIGGEST *STRAIN*--I EVER BEEN UNDER!!-- MY HEART'S *POUNDIN'*-- LIKE IT'S GONNA *BUST!!*

BUT--NO MATTER *WHAT* HAPPENS-- TO ME--I *GOTTA* KEEP TRYIN'--!

ALL I EVER *HAD*-- TO OFFER THE *FF*-- WUZ--MY *STRENGTH!!*

IF *THAT*--AINT NO GOOD NOW--THEN-- I'M *NOTHIN'*--!

HUMANS! I, RONAN, THE PUBLIC *ACCUSER*, IN THE NAME OF THE *KREE RACE*, DO NOW PRONOUNCE YOU ONE AND ALL-- *MOST GUILTY!*

GUILTY OF THE MOST *SERIOUS* CRIME THAT MAY BE COMMITTED AGAINST THE *KREE!*

JUST--A LITTLE-- FURTHER--

THEREFORE, I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO SENTENCE YOU TO PAY-- THE *EXTREME PENALTY!!*

A ROTTEN-- CRUMMY--FEW *INCHES*--!!

WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT *YOU*, FAITHFUL ONE, BUT THE STRAIN'S BEGINNING TO TELL ON *US!* SO, LET'S LOOK IN ON THE STUDIO OF BLIND *ALICIA MASTERS*--

BEN HAS NEVER BEEN SO *LATE* BEFORE!

AND, I'M SO *ANXIOUS* TO TALK TO HIM--TO TELL HIM WHAT'S *HAPPENED!*

HE DOESN'T *KNOW* THAT I WENT TO SEE AN *ANALYST*--

BECAUSE OF THAT STRANGE *VOICE* I'VE BEEN HEARING!

ALICIA--I AM *HERE!*

THERE IT IS *AGAIN!* IT MEANS I--I MUST BE-- GOING *MAD!!*

THERE CAN'T BE ANYONE HERE!
THE DOORS ARE LOCKED--BOLTED--NO ONE COULD OPEN THEM!
I HAVE NO NEED FOR DOORS, ALICIA!
GIVE ME YOUR HAND--YOU MUST TRUST ME--YOU MUST NOT HAVE ANY FEAR!
YOU SHALL COME TO NO HARM!
SOMEHOW--I CANNOT HELP--BUT BELIEVE--WHAT YOU SAY!
LET US NOW DEPART--TOGETHER!
SO LONG AS MY ARM IS ABOUT YOU--NO BARRIER CAN RESTRAIN US!
OKAY, TIGER--NOW THAT WE'VE CALMED DOWN--LET'S RETURN TO THE PARTY--!
WE'RE WASTING OUR TIME! NOTHING CAN EVEN DENT THAT CONE!
BUT, WE CAN'T JUST LET IT SIT THERE--BLOCKIN' TRAFFIC!
HOLD IT, MEN! WE'LL TAKE OVER NOW!
IF ONLY WE KNEW WHAT IT WAS!
FTING!
SPTANG!
REED RICHARDS NIMSELF DESIGNED THIS ALL-PURPOSE BLASTER FOR US SOME MONTHS AGO!
IF THIS CAN'T PENETRATE THAT CONE, WE MIGHT AS WELL TOSS IN THE SPONGE!
THEN YOU BETTER FIND YOURSELF A SPONGE, FELLA!
IT'S NO USE! NOTHING CAN PIERCE THAT THING!
EVEN TONY STARK HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO COME UP WITH AN ANSWER!

MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SOUNDPROOF, LIGHT-PROOF, IMPACT-PROOF CONE--THE CRITICAL STAGE HAS BEEN REACHED--

AND NOW--IT IS TIME TO EXECUTE YOUR SENTENCE!

NO! YOU CAN'T! YOU'VE NO RIGHT--!

UP, JOHNNY!!! OVER THE BEAM--NOW!

GOTCHA, REED!

WHERE IS THE ORANGE-SKINNED ONE? WHAT HAS BECOME OF HIM??

HE CANNOT HAVE ESCAPED!

GOOD WORK, DARLING! BY SHOUTING THE WAY YOU DID--AND ACTING SO FRIGHTENED--YOU KEPT RONAN FROM SUSPECTING THAT YOU HAD MADE BEN INVISIBLE!

BUT, HE STILL HAS--THAT WEAPON OF HIS!

YOU CAN RELEASE YOUR INVISIBILITY FIELD AROUND HIM NOW! THIS IS THE SHOWDOWN!

ONE WIDE-SWEEP BLAST WILL NOW DOWN YOU ALL!

NOT--IF I--CAN HELP IT--!

AND--I CAN--HELP IT--!

MY ARMS!! YOU'RE PINNING MY ARMS!!

RELEASE ME, IN THE NAME OF THE KREE!! THE SENTENCE MUST BE PASSED!!

NEVER HAS A PEOPLE'S ACCUSER FAILED TO EXECUTE A SENTENCE!!

BUT THERE'S ALWAYS A FIRST TIME, SWEETIE!!

AND THIS IS IT!

NOW, JOHNNY--LET'S TAKE HIM!

POOR BEN IS HANGING ON BY GRIT ALONE! I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM!

THESE INVISIBLE FORCE BLASTS WILL SERVE TO CONFUSE RONAN--THEY'LL SLOW UP HIS NORMAL REACTION TIME!

GOOD WORK, BROTHER-IN-LAW!!

AS LONG AS YOU HOLD THAT CLUB OF HIS, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO AIM IT!

WATCH IT, JOHNNY! DON'T GET CARELESS!!

YOU'RE RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE NOZZLE!! YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE OFF--FAST!!

BUT, BEFORE THE STARTLED YOUTH CAN MAKE A MOVE--

SPLAT

JOHNNY!!!

HIS FLAME IS OUT!!

HE MUSTN'T SLAM AGAINST THE WALL THAT WAY--!!

ONLY A SUDDEN CUSHION OF INVISIBLE FORCE CAN SAVE HIM!!

-UNHHH!-

EVEN THOUGH-- I KEPT HIM-- FROM HITTING THE WALL--

THE SHOCK WAS ENOUGH TO KNOCK HIM OUT!

BUT, AT LEAST HE'LL BE ALL-- OHH!!

REED!! I FORGOT ABOUT REED!!

I'VE GOT TO KEEP RONAN FROM AIMING HIS WEAPON--TILL BEN CAN GET HIS STRENGTH BACK!

BUT, HE'S A DOZEN TIMES STRONGER THAN ANY NORMAL HUMAN!

CAN'T--HOLD ON--MUCH LONGER--!

HE'S--FORCING NOZZLE-- TOWARDS ME!! ABOUT TO-- USE IT--!

SOME FAT HELP I AM!!

EVEN WITH ME *HOLDIN'* 'IM, HE MANAGED TO SHOOT SOME KINDA *WHIRL-WIND RAY* AT STRETCHO!

IT'S MAKIN' HIM *UNWIND* HIS GRIP--AN' *NOW*--HE'S PUSHIN' *ME* BACK, TOO!

NEVER HAVE ANY *ACCUSED ONES* RESISTED THEIR SENTENCE SO *SAVAGELY!*

BUT, IT IS ALL TO *NO* AVAIL! *NONE* MAY ESCAPE THE VERDICT OF-- *RONAN*, THE *ACCUSER!*

NOT EVEN THE PRODIGIOUSLY POWERFUL, SUPERBLY-SKILLED *FANTASTIC FOUR!!*

NOW, ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR ME TO *DISLODGE* THE STEADILY-WEAKENING *GRIP* OF *HIM* WHO MEN CALL--THE *THING!*

REMEMBER, I AM NO MERE *HUMAN!* THE STRENGTH WITHIN *MY* LIMBS IS NEARLY THE EQUAL OF YOUR *OWN!*

BUT, I *ALSO* POSSESS --THE *WEAPON SUPREME!*

BEN!! THERE'S *STILL* A CHANCE! USE *STRATAGEM 32* --HE'S IN EXACTLY THE RIGHT POSITION!

I HEAR YA *TALKIN'*, LEADER MAN!

NOW, PARTNER-- SHIFT YOUR *WEIGHT*--USE THE LEVERAGE OF YOUR *SHOULDERS* --*NOW!!*

THUM

YOU *DID* IT!!

HE FELL RIGHT ATOP --HIS *OWN* WEAPON-- *DISCHARGING* IT AT THAT VERY *SECOND!*

WHATEVER *SENTENCE* THE ACCUSER INTENDED TO METE OUT--HAS BEEN *EXECUTED* --UPON *RONAN* HIMSELF!

BUT THEN, SUDDENLY, *ANOTHER* EXPLOSION OCCURS--OF FAR GREATER *INTENSITY* THAN THE FIRST--!

KOOM!

AND, WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS, THE MYSTERIOUS *CONE*, AND ITS ALIEN *OCCUPANT*, ARE *GONE!!* NOTHING *REMAINS*, SAVE--

THE *FF!!* IT WAS *THEM* INSIDE!!

DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE! GET SOME *STRETCHERS!! MOVE!*

WHAT COULD'A DONE *THAT* TO THE *THING?!!*

THROW UP A *BARRICADE!* KEEP THOSE *CROWDS* BACK!

THE ACCUSER'S *GONE*-- AN' HE TOOK HIS LITTLE STAR-HOPPIN' KIDDIE CAR *WITH* 'IM!

SUE! HOW'S *JOHNNY?* WILL THE LAD BE ALL RIGHT??

YES, DARLING! IT WAS ONLY THE SUDDEN *SHOCK* THAT FLOORED HIM!

STAND CLEAR, THERE! LET THOSE *SQUAD CARS* THRU!

O'MALLEY! GET THAT *ARTILLERY* BACK TO THE PRECINCT!

I DON'T *GET* IT, STRETCH!

HOW COME EVERYTHIN' *ENDED* SO FAST??

THERE MUST HAVE BEEN AN *AUTOMATIC ACTIVATOR* ON RONAN'S ORBITING *SHIP!*

YEAH? *NOW* SAY IT IN *ENGLISH!*

WITH THE *FAILURE* OF HIS MISSION, ALL TRACES OF HIS PRESENCE HERE WERE *REMOVED*--INSTANTANEOUSLY!

BUT, *RONAN* NO LONGER *MATTERS* TO US!

WHAT *DOES* MATTER IS--THE *KREE* NOW KNOW THEY ARE DEALING WITH AN *INTELLIGENT* RACE --AND A *FIGHTING* RACE!

AND I PRAY THAT SUCH KNOW-LEDGE WILL KEEP THEM FROM EVER *RETURNING!*

NEXT: THE MYSTERY DEEPENS!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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MARVEL COMICS GROUP

12¢ IND. | 66 SEPT

THE MYSTERY OF THE YEAR!

WHAT LURKS BEHIND THE BEEHIVE?

TO SAVE ALICIA, THE FABULOUS FF MUST SOLVE THE DEADLY RIDDLE OF...

"WHAT LURKS BEHIND THE BEEHIVE?"

THAT'S STRANGE! ALICIA ISN'T *HERE!*

BUT WHY WOULD SHE LEAVE HER FRONT DOOR *UNLOCKED* WHEN SHE WENT OUT?

SHE PROBABLY JUST WENT *SHOPPING!*

I'M SURE SHE'LL BE *BACK* SOON!

NUTS! I BRING THE TWO OF YA *WITH* ME TO TELL HER THAT I HADDA BREAK OUR *DATE* YESTERDAY ON ACCOUNTA US FIGHTIN' THAT BLASTED *KREE**--

'N *NOW* SHE AINT EVEN *HERE* TO LISTEN TO MY EVER-LOVIN' *ALIBI!*

A STRANGE WAY TO START AN ACTION-FILLED MYSTERY EPIC? JUST *WAIT,* FAITHFUL ONE! THE *EXCITEMENT'S* JUST AHEAD--

AIDED BY THE INKING OF *JOVIAL* JOE SINNOTT AND THE LETTERING OF *ADORABLE* ARTIE SIMEK

STAN *(THE MAN)* and JACK *(KING)* LEE KIRBY

HAVE DONE IT AGAIN! BUT DON'T TAKE *OUR* WORD FOR IT! SEE FOR YOURSELF--

*TO *BEN* IT WAS ONLY YESTERDAY-- BUT TO *US* IT WAS A *MONTH* AGO, IN *FF#65,* REMEMBER?--SPECIFIC STAN.

HEY! WHAT IF SHE DIDN'T GO SHOPPIN'?

HOW DO I KNOW SHE AINT OUT DOIN' THE TOWN WITH SOME OTHER JOKER?

I AINT EXACTLY GOT HER UNDER CONTRACT OR NOTHIN'!

DON'T LEAP TO CONCLUSIONS, BEN!

YOU KNOW HOW THAT GIRL FEELS ABOUT YOU!

COME OFF IT, MISTER!

WITH A PAN LIKE MINE, HOW CAN I BE SURE OF ANYTHIN'?!!

BESIDES, WHAT D'YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?

ALL YOU'RE GOOD FOR IS MAKIN' THEM CRUMMY SERUMS OF YOURS--

'CEPTIN' YA NEVER MANAGED TO MAKE ONE THAT'LL GIT ME BACK TO NORMAL AGAIN!!

LOOK, OLD FRIEND-- I KNOW HOW UPSET YOU ARE--

I KNOW HOW MUCH ALICIA MEANS TO--

SHUDDUP!!

FROM WHERE I STAND, YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHIN'!!

BEN!! HOW COULD YOU?!!

REED IS YOUR FRIEND-- YOUR OLDEST--YOUR BEST--YOUR MOST DEVOTED FRIEND!

SURE, SURE! I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT!

BUT THE ONE THING I DON'T NEED FROM HIM--OR FROM ANY-ONE--IS PITY!!

I ONLY TAPPED 'IM! HE'LL BE OKAY!

LET 'IM COOK UP A POTION THAT'LL MAKE ME HUMAN AGAIN--OR ELSE LET 'IM CLAM UP!

WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME FOR MYSELF..

WITHOUT ALICIA!!

DON'T **BLAME** HIM, DARLING!

I KNOW, DEAR-- I KNOW!

SLAM!

NO ONE CAN REALLY TELL THE **AGONY** HE'S ENDURING-- DEEP INSIDE!

IF ONLY --YOU **COULD** FIND A FORMULA--!

I'LL NEVER STOP **TRYING**, SUE! I NEVER **HAVE** STOPPED TRYING!

I'VE CREATED **COUNTLESS** SERUMS--BUT NONE OF THEM WOULD HAVE BEEN **PERMA-NENT!**

I NEVER **TOLD** HIM ABOUT MOST OF THEM--I COULDN'T BEAR TO **DIS-APPOINT** HIM AGAIN!

BUT **SOMEDAY** I'LL FIND THE RIGHT ONE! I'LL NEVER **REST** TILL I DO!

BUT, THE TIME HAS COME TO LEAVE **REED RICHARDS** ALONE WITH HIS OWN TORTURED THOUGHTS--AS WE VISIT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, AN INCREDIBLY COMPLEX **STRUCTURE** WHICH LOOMS HIGH ABOVE A ROCKY PLATEAU IN WHAT IS POSSIBLY THE **REMOTEST** SPOT ON EARTH!!

ITS EXISTENCE TOTALLY UNSUSPECTED--COMPLETELY INACCESSIBLE TO ANY NORMAL MEANS OF TRAVEL-- IT STANDS LIKE SOME GROTESQUE, GIGANTIC **BEEHIVE...**

AND WITHIN ITS UNCANNY, ELECTRONICALLY-CONTROLLED INTERIOR, LURKS ONE OF THE STRANGEST, MOST STARTLING **MYSTERIES** OF THE CENTURY--A MYSTERY WHICH MAY SOON CONCERN US **ALL**--

IN THE EXACT CENTER OF THE SILENT STRUCTURE A SERIES OF *SIGNAL LIGHTS* BEGIN TO FLASH, AND THEN--TENSE, SLOW-MOVING *FIGURES* CAUTIOUSLY EMERGE THRU A VIOLENTLY GLOWING *TRANSFER-GRID*--

IT IS *HAMILTON!* HE HAS *RETURNED* --WITH THE *GIRL!*

HAVE NO *FEAR*, ALICIA!

WHILE YOUR HAND IS HELD IN MINE, YOU ARE PERFECTLY *SAFE!*

GOOD WORK, HAMILTON! SHE IS JUST THE ONE WE *WANTED!*

BE *SILENT*, ZOTA! IT IS *I* WHO SHALL DO THE TALKING!

BRING THE GIRL *FORTH*, HAMILTON-- SO THAT SHE MAY KNOW WHO WE *ARE* --AND WHY SHE IS *HERE!*

DO NOT *ALARM* HER, MORLAK! REMEMBER--SHE IS *BLIND*--AND UN-PREPARED FOR ALL THIS!

OF *COURSE*, SHINSKI! IT IS HER VERY *BLIND-NESS* THAT MAKES HER SO *VALUABLE* TO US!

WELCOME TO THE *CITADEL OF SCIENCE*, YOUNG LADY!

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR--FOR WE ARE ALL YOUR *FRIENDS!*

WHAT MORLAK SAYS IS *TRUE*, ALICIA!

WE ARE ALL *SCIENTISTS* --SCIENTISTS WHO HAVE RETREATED FROM THE WORLD OUTSIDE TO ENGAGE IN AN AWESOME, EARTH-SHAKING *EXPERIMENT!*

YOUR ESCORT HAS BEEN *DR. HAMILTON*, WHOSE SPECIALTY IS *MEDICINE!* I MYSELF AM *MORLAK*, MASTER OF *NUCLEAR PHYSICS!*

THE OTHER TWO ARE *MR. ZOTA*, WHOSE FIELD IS *ELECTRONICS* --AND *PROFESSOR SHINSKI*, THE DEAN OF *BIOLOGY* AND *GENETICS RESEARCH!*

I-I'VE HEARD OF *ALL* OF YOU! YOU'RE *WORLD FAMOUS!*

BUT, *EACH* OF YOU WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE *DIED*--IN PLANE CRASHES, LAB ACCIDENTS--THE WORLD DOESN'T KNOW YOU'RE STILL *ALIVE!*

BECAUSE WE *WISH* IT THAT WAY, MISS MASTERS!

BUT--WHY HAVE YOU *BROUGHT* ME HERE?? WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY WANT--WITH *ME*??

THAT YOU SHALL *LEARN*-- IN DUE TIME!

I SHALL REMOVE THE *SPACE WARPER* WHICH ENABLES ME TO INSTANTLY TRAVEL TO ANY AREA ON EARTH!

SINCE IT IS *IRREPLACEABLE*, I'LL RETURN IT TO THE *VAULT*--AND THEN REJOIN YOU!

BEFORE WE EXPLAIN ANY FURTHER, WE MUST PUT YOU TO A LITTLE *TEST!*

A *TEST?* WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?*

ATOP THIS MOVING RAMP, YOU SHALL FIND THE ANSWER! LET US GO!

SECONDS LATER--

YOU ARE STANDING BEFORE A LARGE BLOCK OF *GRANITE!*

WILL YOU BE SO KIND AS TO SCULPT A *BUST*--AN EXACT REPLICA OF MY OWN *HEAD!*

ALTHOUGH YOU ARE *SIGHTLESS*, YOUR FAME AS A *SCULPTRESS* HAS EVEN REACHED US *HERE*, WITHIN OUR HIDDEN CITADEL!

BUT--THINK HOW *LONG* IT WOULD TAKE--TO CHIP AWAY AT A BLOCK LIKE *THIS!*

NOT AS LONG AS YOU *THINK*, MISS MASTERS!

WE HAVE A WAY OF *SPEEDING UP* THE PROCESS!

BUT FIRST--YOU MUST TELL US *YOUR* SECRET...

HOW CAN YOU *SCULPT* SOMETHING THAT YOU CANNOT *SEE?*

IT TOOK YEARS OF STUDY--OF PAINSTAKING *PRACTICE!*

I DO IT BY *TOUCH*--BY *FEELING* THE CONTOURS OF MY SUBJECT'S FACE!

VERY WELL! THEN LET US *PROCEED!*

ZOTA! HAND THE GIRL THE *ELECTRONI-BLADE!*

TAKE IT, MISS MASTERS! THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR!

WHY--DO YOU CALL IT--BY SUCH A STRANGE *NAME?*

TRY IT--AND YOU WILL UNDER-STAND!

IT SEEMS TO *THROB*--AS THOUGH FILLED WITH A STRANGE KIND OF *ENERGY!*

IT'S CUTTING THRU THE SOLID *GRANITE* AS THOUGH IT'S ONLY *BUTTER!*

PRECISELY! MERELY ANOTHER OF OUR SOMEWHAT UNIQUE *DISCOVERIES!*

CONTINUE WORKING! WE SHALL *WAIT!*

FOR LONG, TENSE, SEEMINGLY-ENDLESS MINUTES, THE FRAGILE FINGERS OF *ALICIA MASTERS* MOVE AS THOUGH POSSESSING A WILL OF THEIR OWN, UNTIL--AT LAST--

YOU MAY COME *CLOSER* NOW! I AM JUST ABOUT *FINISHED!*

INCREDIBLE! IT IS BEYOND DOUBT A *PERFECT LIKENESS!*

THIS MEANS *HAMILTON'S* CHOICE WAS *PERFECT* FOR US!

YES!! OUR *MISSION* MAY NOW PROCEED AS PLANNED!

WE HAVE *FOUND* THE ONE WE NEED!

BUT, BECAUSE WE FIGURE YOU'VE BEEN SUBJECTED TO *ENOUGH* COMPOUNDED CONFUSION FOR ONE SITTING, LET'S TAKE A BREATHER AS WE RETURN TO BAD-TEMPERED, BROODING *BENJAMIN GRIMM*--

EVERYWHERE I GO--EVERY-WHERE I LOOK--I GIT REMINDED ABOUT *ALICIA!*

EVERYONE *ELSE* HAS A GAL--SOME-ONE TO PUT HIS ARMS AROUND--TO MAKE 'IM FEEL LIKE A BLASTED *PRINCE CHARMIN'!!!*

BUT WHERE DOES A--A *THING* COME OFF ENVYIN' THAT KINDA STUFF?!!

HEARTS 'N FLOWERS IS OKAY FOR EVERYONE *ELSE*--

BUT THERE AINT MUCH DEMAND FER WALKIN' *MONSTERS* DOWN IN LOVERS' LANE!

NUTS! WHY DON'T I CUT OUTTA THE WHOLE *HUMAN RACE!*

OR MEBBE I CAN *MAKE* IT--IN SOME CRUMMY *FREAK SHOW!*

WELL, WELL! IF IT ISN'T THE *THING!* RIGHT ON MY OWN BEAT!

DID YOU LOSE YOUR *TOPCOAT,* MR. GRIMM?

YOU DON'T *USUALLY* WALK AROUND TOWN THIS WAY!

WHAT'SA DIFFERENCE *WHAT* I WEAR?

A *COAT* AINT GONNA TURN ME INTA *ROCK HUDSON!*

WHY WOULD YOU *WANT* IT TO?

YOU'RE MORE FAMOUS THAN *HE* IS!

LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S *TROUBLING* YOU--BUT IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO *HELP*--?

THAT'S REAL *GENEROUS,* PAL--!

HOW ARE YA AT HANDIN' OUT SMALL SCALE *MIRACLES* ON SHORT NOTICE?

ANYWAY, THE ONE THING THAT BUGS ME IS SYMPATHY!

LOOK! IT'S BIG BEN GRIMM--RIGHT IN OUR PARK!

HE'S EVEN CUTER IN REAL LIFE THAN IN THE PICTURES I'VE SEEN!

SYMPATHY! WHY WOULD ANYONE SYMPATHIZE WITH YOU? YOU'VE GOT IT MADE! YOU'RE THE STRONGEST JOE AROUND--YOU LEAD THE MOST EXCITING LIFE--AND EVERYONE FLIPS FOR YOU!

C'MON! LET'S GO TALK TO 'IM!

WOW! LOOK AT THOSE SHOULDERS!

HE'S A WALKIN' MESS OF MUSCLES!

YA CAN SAY THAT AGAIN! I'M A WALKIN' MESS, ALL RIGHT!

HOW ABOUT YOUR AUTOGRAPH, MR. GRIMM?

SOME OTHER TIME, KID!

COULD YOU BEND A LAMPPOST OR SOMETHING FOR US??

YEAH! HOW ABOUT IT?

BOYS! GIRLS! COME AWAY FROM HERE!

YOU SHOULDN'T CLUSTER AROUND THE THING THAT WAY!

AT LEAST YER HONEST, LADY!

I DON'T BLAME YA FOR NOT WANTIN' THEM KIDS TO GIT TOO CLOSE TO A GARGOYLE LIKE ME!

A GARGOYLE?? YOU?!!

OH, NO! YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG!

I WAS AFRAID THEY WERE ANNOYING YOU! IT WAS YOU I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT--NOT THEM!

YOU WUZ THINKIN' OF--ME??

WHY, OF COURSE!

I THINK YOU'RE THE BRAVEST, SWEETEST, MOST WONDERFUL MAN IN THE WORLD!

I'LL BE THE ENVY OF EVERY FEMALE I KNOW WHEN THEY LEARN THAT I ACTUALLY KISSED YOU!

YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN, BEN GRIMM!

SHE MEANT IT! SHE--SHE'D NEVER HAVE KISSED A REAL CRUMB-BUM LIKE THAT!

IT MUST BE A WONDERFUL FEELING TO KNOW THAT PEOPLE ALL OVER THINK YOU'RE THE GREATEST!

I OUGHTTA FIND ME A GOOD *HEAD-SHRINKER!!*

I GO TAKIN' A POKE AT THE BEST BUDDY A GUY EVER *HAD*--AND I GIT *RILED-UP* AT MY GAL WITHOUT EVEN WAITIN' TO FIND OUT WHAT *GIVES!*

SEE YA *LATER,* PAL! I GOT ME SOME TALL *MAKIN' UP* TO DO!

SAY!! WE JUST *THOUGHT* OF SOMETHING! WE ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT THE *HUMAN TORCH!* SO, LET'S MAKE *UP* FOR THAT CATACLYSMIC OVERSIGHT RIGHT *NOW*--

WOULDN'TCHA *KNOW* IT!

I'M SEARCHING FOR *CRYSTAL* ALL OVER TOWN--AND THERE SHE *IS*-- RIGHT ON THE ROOF OF OUR OWN *HQ!!*

CRYS, HONEY-- IT'S *JOHNNY!!* WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP *THERE?*

DON'T "CRYS HONEY" *ME,* MR. STORM!

NOT AFTER THE WAY YOU LEFT ME SITTING IN YOUR *CAR*-- IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE--FOR *HOURS* THE OTHER DAY!

BUT I COULDN'T *HELP* IT! I HAD TO GO AND HELP *REED* AND THE OTHERS!

YOU MIGHT HAVE TAKEN *ME!*

IT WAS TOO *DANGEROUS!*

HOOO BOY! I'VE GOTTA FIND SOME WAY TO *THAW* HER! AHH--I *KNOW!!*

CRYSTAL-- *HELP!!* MY FLAME'S *OUT OF CONTROL!*

DO SOMETHING-- *QUICK*--UNLESS YOU WANNA SEE ME *CRASH!*

I'LL DO SOMETHING! I'LL *SHUT MY EYES!*

YOU CAN'T FOOL *ME* WITH THOSE CHILDISH ANTICS, MR. STORM!

LISTEN, LADY! FOR THE *MILLIONTH* TIME, YOU INHUMANS ARE AS HUMAN AS *ANYBODY!*

YOU'VE JUST GOT SOME NUTTY *EXTRA POWERS*, THAT'S ALL!

EVEN IF I *DO* HAPPEN TO BE AN *INHUMAN!!*

OH! NOW I'M *NUTTY*, AM I?

I DIDN'T *MEAN* THAT!

GOSH, CRYS-- DON'T TWIST AROUND EVERY-THING I *SAY* JUST 'CAUSE YOU'RE *MAD* AT ME!

MAD AT YOU?? WHO'S *MAD* AT YOU?

OH, YOU'RE *NOT*, EH?

THAT'S *GREAT!* THEN C'MON--GIVE ME ONE LITTLE *KISS* AND WE'LL FORGET THE WHOLE THING!

OH *NO!!* YOU'RE NOT TRICKING ME INTO *THAT!*

I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT I WAS *SAYING!* I *AM* STILL MAD AT YOU!!

JOHNNY STORM!! DON'T YOU *DARE!!*

HEY! WHA--?? *LOOK OUT!!* -UNNHHH--!!-

YOU AND THAT ELEMENTAL *POWER* OF YOURS!!

TURN OFF THE *WHIRLWIND*, WILL YA?!!

OH, JOHNNY-- I'M *SORRY!*

IT HAPPENED BEFORE I COULD *STOP* IT!

ARE YOU--ARE YOU *ALL RIGHT!* IF--ANYTHING EVER *HAPPENED* TO YOU--!!

I'M OKAY *NOW*, CRYS!

THAT *LOOK* IN YOUR EYES COULD CURE ME OF *ANY-THING!*

THUS, HAVING PATCHED UP THEIR LITTLE LOVERS' QUARREL, THE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVE THE ROOFTOP, ENTERING THE LAB OF *MR. FANTASTIC* A FEW MINUTES LATER--

HI, REED! 'LO, SIS! WE WERE JUST--

SAY! THAT'S YOUR *HEAT-IMAGE TRACER* YOU'RE WORKING ON, ISN'T IT?

WHAT'S *HAPPENED?* SOMEONE MUST BE *MISSING!* BUT-- *WHO??*

WHAT EXACTLY *IS* A "HEAT-IMAGE TRACER"?

WE'D BETTER LET *REED* EXPLAIN IT, CRYSTAL!

VERY SIMPLY, IT CAN PROJECT A *PICTURE* OF SOMETHING WHICH HAPPENED IN THE RECENT *PAST*--

BY MEANS OF TRACING THE *HEAT IMAGES* WHICH MAY STILL BE REMAINING IN THE AREA!

THEN YOU *DO* THINK ALICIA MAY BE IN SOME *DANGER*, DEAR?

LOOK, HONEY--WE *BOTH* KNOW SHE'D NEVER STAY AWAY WITHOUT GETTING IN TOUCH WITH *BEN!*

MOREOVER, SHE'S VANISHED WITHOUT A *TRACE*--YET HER *PURSE* WAS STILL IN HER ROOM--

AND, TO *TOP* IT OFF--ABSOLUTELY *NO ONE* SAW HER *LEAVE!*

BUT *WE* DID, DIDN'T WE? AND WHILE WE'RE AT IT, LET'S SEE WHAT'S DOING BACK AT THE SOMEWHAT SINISTER-SEEMING *CITADEL*--!

THOUGH YOU DO NOT *SEE* THEM, THERE ARE DEDICATED MEN ALL ABOUT YOU--

EACH PARTICIPATING IN THE MOST *AMAZING* EXPERIMENT OF ALL TIME!!

BUT, WHAT *IS* THE EXPERIMENT?

--AND WHY DO YOU NEED *ME* --A *BLIND SCULPTRESS*--TO ASSIST YOU??

BECAUSE ONLY SOMEONE WHO IS *SIGHTLESS* WILL BE ABLE TO--*WAIT!!*

I *HEAR* SOMETHING--ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE *WALL!*

IT CAN'T BE *HIM!!* IT'S *TOO SOON!!*

BUT THEN, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER--UTTERLY WITHOUT ANY ADDITIONAL WARNING--

GET *BACK!! BACK!!*

TOO LATE! HE'S *LOOSE* AGAIN!

GUARDS.! GUARDS.!! WHERE ARE THE GUARDS.!!

HE MUST BE STOPPED NOW--WHILE THERE STILL IS TIME!

WE'RE DONE FOR.!! ALL OF US! NOTHING CAN STOP HIM NOW.!! WE'RE ALL DOOMED.!!

I HEAR THE GUARDS.! THEY'RE COMING.!! THERE'S STILL A CHANCE!

HE'S IN THE VICINITY OF LOCK 41.!

SURROUND THE AREA.!! SECURE ALL SAFETY HATCHES.! HE MUST NOT BREAK THRU!

THE GIRL.!! IS SHE ALL RIGHT.??

THE POOR CHILD DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.! WE CAN'T KEEP HER IN THE DARK THIS WAY, MORLAK.!

AHH, GOOD! GOOD.! UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MUST ANY HARM COME TO HER.!-- NOT YET!

I SAY WE TELL HER THE TRUTH! WE HAVE NO CHOICE!

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? NOTHING CAN SAVE US NOW! NOTHING.!

SHINSKI.!! BE SILENT, YOU SPINELESS OLD FOOL.!

HE HASN'T GOTTEN TO US YET.! GIVEN ENOUGH TIME-- AND THE HELP OF ALICIA MASTERS--WE MAY STILL BE TRIUMPHANT!

IT'S SO MAD.!! SO INSANE! I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF IT!

DO NOT TROUBLE YOURSELF! THIS VITRA-BROTH I'M POURING WILL HELP YOU TO RELAX!

IT--IS SO *SOOTHING!* I FEEL--AS THOUGH ALL MY TROUBLES--ARE JUST MELTING AWAY--!

OF *COURSE!* IT IS ONE OF OUR LESSER, MORE INCONSEQUENTIAL DISCOVERIES!

AND NOW, SINCE YOU HAVE *EARNED* THE RIGHT TO AN EXPLANATION, YOU SHALL *HAVE* ONE!

BUT, WHERE SHALL I *BEGIN--?*

I WILL START WITH OUR *PRIME PURPOSE*--TO ABOLISH *WAR, CRIME,* AND *ILLNESS*--BY CREATING A *PERFECT RACE OF HUMAN BEINGS!*

CREATE HUMAN BEINGS?? *HOW??*

THAT WAS WHAT WE HAD TO *LEARN!*

WE CAME TO THIS REMOTE LAND AND *PLEDGED* OURSELVES TO THE PROJECT!

WE WOULD NEVER *LEAVE*--NEVER *GIVE UP*--UNTIL WE HAD CREATED *ONE* PERFECT HUMAN--WHO WOULD THEN BE THE FORERUNNER OF A *SUPREME NEW RACE!*

"AFTER YEARS OF UNCEASING EXPERIMENTATION, WE *FINALLY* CREATED ONE EMBRYONIC CREATURE--WHO LIVES WITHIN A *LIFE-CELL TANK*--"

"EACH DAY HE HAD BEEN *NOURISHED*--AS WE WATCHED HIM THRIVE AND *GROW*--AS WE ADDED MORE AND MORE CONDITIONING CHEMICALS--"

OUR INSTRUMENTATION SHOWS THAT HE IS NOW REACHING THE STAGE OF *ADULTHOOD!*

AT *LAST,* SHINSKI!! AT *LAST!!*

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT *MEANS,* ZOTA??

HE'S NEARLY *READY!!* IN A FEW MORE DAYS--WE'LL BE ABLE TO *REMOVE* HIM!! HE'LL FINALLY *EMERGE*--FROM THE TANK!

IT WILL BE A *GREAT* DAY, MORLAK--FOR US *ALL!*

"BUT THEN--THAT VERY NIGHT--*DISASTER* STRUCK--!"

THE *ALARM!!* SOMETHING'S *WRONG* WITHIN THE *TANK!*

WE'VE GOT TO *BREAK IN!!* THOSE ARE MORLAK'S *ORDERS!*

LOOK!! OVER THERE!! IT-- IT'S HIM!!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!! HE--DID IT--BY HIMSELF!!

HE'S FREE!! HE GOT OUT OF THE TANK!

DON'T SHOOT!! HE MUSTN'T BE HARMED!! SEND FOR THE OTHERS!

THE ALARM IS SOUNDING!! THEY'LL BE HERE IN MINUTES!!

QUICKLY! QUICKLY!! NOTHING MUST HAPPEN-- TO HIM!!

MORLAK!! WHAT IF WE'VE TAMPERED WITH SOMETHING--WHICH IS TOO POWERFUL FOR US TO CONTROL??

DON'T BE A FOOL, ZOTA! IT CAN'T--WAIT!!

LOOK!! LOOK AT THE CHAMBER!! IT'S BEEN WRECKED-- AND THE TANK-- IT'S EMPTY!

THAT MEANS--HE'S BROKEN FREE!

IT'S THE ONE THING I FEARED!

YOU'RE TOO LATE!! NOT EVEN YOU CAN STOP HIM NOW! HE'S FREE-- FREE!!

STAND ASIDE, YOU QUIVERING COWARDS!

I'LL APPROACH HIM--MYSELF!!

HE'S OUT OF THE TANK--BUT HE'S STILL WITHIN THE CHAMBER!! THERE'S HIS SHADOW--MOVING WITHIN!

WE WERE WRONG! HE WASN'T READY TO EMERGE YET! HE'S STILL TOO DANGEROUS!

HE'S PREPARING TO *ATTACK!!* ONLY *ONE THING* WILL STOP HIM NOW--!!

THE *ELECTRO-SHOCK* TUBE! LET ME *HAVE* IT--*QUICK!!*

HERE! BUT HURRY-- *HURRY!!*

IT'S *WORKING!!* IT'S FORCING HIM *BACK!!*

QUICK--PUT ON THE *LIGHTS!!* LET'S GET A *LOOK* AT HIM!!

"BUT, BEFORE THE SWITCH COULD BE THROWN--"

THOK!

HE'S SMASHING ME AGAINST THE *WALL!!*

GET ME *OUT*-- *OUT*-- BEFORE IT'S *TOO LATE!*

WE MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM THE CHAMBER WITH *SECONDS* TO SPARE!!

BUT, WE NEVER *DID* GET A *LOOK* AT OUR SUPREME *CREATION!*

AND NOW--WE *CANNOT* SEE HIM! FOR, HE RADIATES A *BLINDING* POWER!

MORLAK SPEAKS THE *TRUTH!* NO HUMAN EYES CAN *LOOK* AT HIM!

THAT IS WHY *YOU* ALONE CAN HELP US!!

NOW I UNDER-STAND!

YOU WANT *ME* TO GET WITHIN REACH OF HIM--SINCE MY EYES *CANNOT* BE HARMED BY THE BLINDING *POWER* HE GENERATES!

AND THEN--YOU WANT ME TO SCULPT A *STATUE* OF HIM--SO THAT YOU CAN KNOW WHAT HE *LOOKS* LIKE!

PRECISELY!!

AND, AS *ALICIA MASTERS* RECOILS IN STUNNED DISBELIEF AT THE TASK THAT AWAITS HER, AN ABASHED *VISITOR* HAS WORDS WITH HER *LAND-LADY--!*

YOU MEAN--ALICIA DIDN'T GET BACK *YET??*

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW SHE HAD *LEFT*, MR. GRIMM!

I DIDN'T SEE HER *GO OUT!*

HOWEVER, THE *OTHER* MEMBERS OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* ARE UP IN HER ROOM *NOW!*

REED--SUE--AND JOHNNY --UP IN ALICIA'S APARTMENT??

THEY WOULDN'T ALL *BE* THERE, UNLESS--

PERHAPS *THEY* CAN GIVE YOU SOME INFORMA-TION ABOUT THE GIRL!

UNLESS THERE WAS SOMETHIN' *WRONG!!* SOMETHIN' *PLENTY* WRONG!

AWRIGHT, STRETCH--START *TALKIN'!!*

WHAT'S GOIN' *ON* HERE!! WHAT HAPPENED TO ALICIA THAT I DON'T *KNOW* ABOUT --THAT YOU AINT *TELLIN'??*

QUIET, BEN! COME IN AND CLOSE THE DOOR *GENTLY* BEHIND YOU!

THE CONTROLS ARE ALL *SET* NOW, AND NOTHING MUST HAPPEN TO *DISTURB* THEM!!

REED IS TRYING TO *FIND* ALICIA, BEN!

HIS ONLY CHANCE IS TO USE THE *HEAT-IMAGE TRACER* BEFORE THE HEAT WAVES ARE *DISSIPATED* IN THE ROOM!

I DON'T KNOW ANY MORE ABOUT HER DISAPPEARANCE THAN *YOU* DO, BEN--BUT THIS IS OUR *ONE* WAY TO *FIND OUT!*

LOOK, STRETCH--ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE-- I DIDN'T MEAN TO CLOUT YA LIKE THAT--!

I KNOW YOU DIDN'T, BIG FELLA! AND ANYWAY-- MAYBE I HAD IT COMING!

BESIDES, IF IT MADE YOU FEEL BETTER, IT WAS PROBABLY WORTH IT!

MOVE, BEN! YOU'RE BLOCKING THE TEMPORAL-LENS COMPLEX!

REED, WADDAYA THINK HAPPENED TO HER?

IZZIT ONE OF THE FINKS WE FOUGHT IN THE PAST, TRYIN' TA PAY ME BACK?

AT THIS POINT, YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE!

BUT, I'M LOCKED IN ON A STRONG HEAT-BAND NOW--AND ONCE THE FILM GETS ROLLING-- WE'LL SEE!

NUTS! I CAN'T TAKE ALL THIS WAITIN'!!!

WHAT IF SHE'S IN DANGER?? WHAT IF SHE NEEDS ME RIGHT NOW??

IT'S DRIVIN' ME OUTTA MY HEAD--DO YA HEAR??

LOOK AT ME!! I'M STRONG ENUFF TO PUT A DENT IN A BLASTED BATTLESHIP!!

I CAN PUNCH MY WAY INTA FORT KNOX IF I FEEL LIKE IT!!

BUT I CAN'T EVEN FIND ONE HELPLESS, INNOCENT BLIND GAL--WHEN SHE MAY BE NEEDIN' ME THE MOST!!

SIMMER DOWN, PARTNER! RANTING AND RAVING NEVER DID ANYONE ANY GOOD!

WE'VE GOT OUR PICTURE! NOW, ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS PROJECT IT!

OKAY! OKAY! WHAT'RE YA WAITIN' FOR--CHRISTMAS?? LET'S SEE WHAT THE BLAMED THING SHOWS!!

SUE--SEE IF YOU CAN FIND ONE OF OUR FOLDING SCREENS!

NEVER MIND WAITIN' FOR A BLASTED *SCREEN!*

HERE--WE CAN USE ONE OF THE BIG *MURAL BOARDS* ALICIA USEDTA KEEP AROUND!

GOOD IDEA, BEN! STAND IT AGAINST THE WALL--WHILE I MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS!

ALL RIGHT! WE'RE READY TO *ROLL!*

I'LL TURN OFF THE LIGHTS!

I'M-- ALMOST *SCARED*-- TO SEE WHAT COMES *NEXT*--!

YOU 'N ME *BOTH*, LADY!

IT'S *WORKIN'!!* THERE'S ALICIA *NOW!*

BUT--SHE DON'T LOOK LIKE SHE WUZ GETTIN' READY TO *GO* ANYWHERE!

HEY! SHE MUST BE *HEARIN'* SOMETHING --RIGHT THERE IN HER *ROOM!!*

IT'S A *MAN*--IN SOME SORT OF OUTLANDISH *GARB!!* BUT--WHERE DID HE *COME* FROM??

WHO *IS* HE?? I NEVER *SAW* 'IM BEFORE!!

THEY'RE *TALKIN'*-- BUT, WE CAN'T TELL WHAT THEY'RE *SAYIN'!!*

WHY IN BLAZES CAN'T THAT FILM PICK UP THE *SOUND*, ALSO?!

LOOK! HE'S REACHIN' HIS *HAND* OUT FOR HER!!

THAT'S WHY NOBODY SAW HER LEAVE!!

IT'S *UNCANNY!!* THEY'RE BOTH WALKING OUT-- RIGHT THRU THE *SOLID WALL!!*

BUT *WHERE??* HOW CAN I GO *AFTER* 'EM--IF I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE'S *TAKIN'* HER?!!

WORRIED AS HE IS, *BEN GRIMM* MIGHT BE FAR *MORE* WORRIED IF HE COULD SEE ALICIA *NOW*-- IF HE COULD KNOW THE DREAD *MISSION* SHE IS ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE--

I SEE YOU HAVE THE *CLAY* STRAPPED TO YOUR BACK-- SO YOU CAN MOLD HIS IMAGE ON THE *SPOT!*

YES, MR. HAMILTON!

I'M ALL *READY* NOW!

I AM GOING *WITH* YOU!

REMEMBER--WHATEVER YOU DO--STAY *CLOSE* TO ME!

I FEEL A *WEAPON* IN YOUR HANDS!

WHY ARE YOU *CARRYING* IT?

I WAS TOLD THERE WOULD BE *NO DANGER!*

HAMILTON!! WHO GAVE *YOU* PERMISSION TO *ACCOMPANY* THE GIRL??

THERE IS STILL MUCH *WORK* TO BE DONE HERE! YOU CANNOT BE *SPARED!*

I DON'T CARE *WHAT* YOU MAY HAVE TOLD ALICIA--I WON'T PERMIT HER TO GO *ALONE!*

I *WARN* YOU!! YOU'RE BREAKING THE CODE OF CITADEL *DISCIPLINE!!*

I WAS A *MAN* BEFORE I BECAME A *SCIENTIST!* NOW--*STAND ASIDE*-- ALL OF YOU!!

LOCK 41 IS NOW *OPEN*, DOCTOR HAMILTON! YOU AND THE GIRL MAY *ENTER!*

WHIRRRR!

DO NOT BE *AFRAID!* WHATEVER HAPPENS-- I'LL BE *WITH* YOU!

LOCK 41

AS SOON AS THEY ARE WITHIN-- *SHUT IT*-- QUICKLY!!

WE CAN TAKE NO *CHANCES!*

I KNOW THERE MUST BE MORE--*FAR* MORE-- TO ALL THIS THAN MORLAK *TOLD* ME!

YOU ARE *RIGHT*, ALICIA! MORLAK DIDN'T TELL THE *WHOLE* STORY!

THE CREATURE WE SEEK POSSESSES *POWERS* WHICH WE CAN ONLY *GUESS* AT!

POWERS SO *GREAT* THAT NO MAN HAS EVEN BEEN ABLE TO *SEE* HIM!

STAND BACK-- QUICKLY!!

A *FLAMING BARRIER* IS SHOOTING ACROSS THE TUNNEL WALLS!! IT MUST NOT *TOUCH* YOU!!

EVEN FROM *HERE*--I CAN FEEL THE STIFLING *HEAT!!*

IT'S *HIS* DOING!! HE KNOWS WE'RE *HERE!*

THE FLAME BARRIER IS MERELY A *WARNING!!*

BUT *WHY?* IF HE'S SO *POWERFUL*-- WHY SHOULD HE BOTHER TO *WARN* US??

SINCE WE DON'T YET KNOW THE *ANSWER* TO ALICIA'S DESPERATE QUESTION, WE MIGHT AS WELL RETURN TO THE *FF* ONCE MORE--

REED'S BEEN IN THE LAB FOR *HOURS* NOW, SIS! ANY *WORD* YET?

HE'S STILL TRYING --TO FIND A WAY-- TO LOCATE *ALICIA!*

DOES IT HAVETA *TAKE* SO LONG? WHY CAN'T HE COME UP WITH SOMETHIN' *FAST?!!*

WHAT IS MR. FANTASTIC *WORKING* ON IN THERE?

BEN--DEAR, *DEAR BEN*-- YOU KNOW AS WELL AS *WE* DO HOW *DIFFICULT* THE TASK IS!

YOU KNOW THAT REED IS DOING HIS *BEST* IN THERE-- THAT HE WON'T STOP FOR *ANYTHING*-- UNTIL HE'S FOUND A WAY TO *HELP!*

YEAH! YEAH! I KNOW, SUSIE--OF *COURSE* I KNOW!!

BUT WHEN THERE'S NOTHIN' FOR ME TO *DO*--WHEN THERE'S NO ONE I CAN *CLOBBER* --I GOTTA LET OFF STEAM *SOMEHOW!*

EVEN YELLIN' UP A *STORM* IS BETTER'N *NOTHIN'!*

AND THEN, THE LAB DOOR SLOWLY OPENS-- AS A WEARY VOICE SOFTLY INTONES--

IF YOU'LL ALL BE *QUIET* FOR A MOMENT--I THINK I HAVE SOMETHING OF *INTEREST* TO SHOW YOU--!

DIDJA *DO* IT?? DIDJA *FIND* HER??

WHAT'S *THIS*??? IS *THIS* ALL YA GOT TO SHOW FOR THE TIME WE BEEN COOLIN' OUR HEELS OUTSIDE YER *DOOR*??

IT'S NOTHIN' BUT A *PICTURE*--A PICTURE OF SOME BLASTED *BRACELET!!*

REMEMBER THE MAN WHO LED ALICIA THRU THE WALL?

THAT'S AN ENLARGEMENT OF HIS *WRIST*--AND OF THE *WRIST BAND* WHICH HE WAS WEARING!

I'M CONVINCED THAT *BRACELET*, AS YOU CALL IT, IS THE *INSTRUMENT* WHICH ENABLED THEM TO *PENETRATE* THE WALL ITSELF!

BUT--WHAT DO WE DO *NOW*?

OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO *DUPLICATE* THE WRIST BAND--AND THEN-- *USE IT*--TO PASS THRU THE WALL *OURSELVES*--HOPING TO FIND ALICIA!

I'VE ALREADY *STARTED* ANALYZING THE CIRCUITS WHICH THE PHOTO REVEALS! I THINK I CAN MAKE AN *EXACT COPY*--WHICH MIGHT LEAD US-- *ANYWHERE!!*

AND, EVEN AS REED RICHARDS SPEAKS--

HE'S COMING *CLOSER!* HE'S ALMOST *UPON* US!

EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T SEE HIM-- I CAN *FEEL* HIS PRESENCE--HIS *HATRED*--REACHING OUT--LIKE A LIVING THING--!!

NEXT The Power Of... HIM!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

AT LAST YOU WILL LEARN WHAT LIVES... WITHIN THE COCOON!

MARVEL™ COMICS GROUP

12¢ IND. 67 OCT

FEATURING: THE POWER OF... HIM!

AT LAST! THE FABULOUS F.F. FINALLY DISCOVER THE UNCANNY POWER OF..HIM!

"WHEN OPENS THE... COCOON!"

ALICIA MASTERS HAS BEEN MYSTERIOUSLY BROUGHT TO A HIDDEN LAND KNOWN ONLY AS THE CITADEL OF SCIENCE! WHILE, BACK AT HOME, THE BRILLIANT LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR TOILS TIRELESSLY, SEEKING A WAY TO RESCUE THE MISSING GIRL--

FEATURING... THE CREATURE IN LOCK 41!

THE ONLY WAY TO FIND HER IS TO DUPLICATE THE ELECTRONIC BRACELET WHICH HER CAPTOR WORE, BEN!

BY FEEDING THIS COMPUTER ALL THE DATA I'VE COLLECTED, WE'LL SAVE DAYS OF TIRESOME CALCULATIONS!

YA STILL THINK IT WUZ THAT NUTTY BRACELET THAT LET 'EM WALK THRU THE WALL, STRETCH?

IT'S THE ONLY POSSIBILITY, OLD FRIEND!

PROUDLY PRODUCED BY: STAN (THE MAN) LEE and JACK (KING) KIRBY

EXOTICALLY EMBELLISHED BY: JOE SINNOTT

LABORIOUSLY LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK

SPECIAL-ORDER COMPUTER FURNISHED BY: THE FRIENDLY FORBUSH LEASING CORP.

YOU'LL NOTICE I'VE HAD ALL THE PARTS OF THE WRIST BAND PHOTO ***MAGNIFIED***-- ENLARGED ***HUNDREDS*** OF TIMES--

A BLOW-UP LIKE ***THIS*** ENABLES ME TO ANALYZE EACH SECTION-- AND THEN TO MAKE A NEW ***SKETCH*** OF THE ENTIRE APPARATUS!

I ***STILL*** DON'T GET IT!!

SOME CREEP GRABBED MY ***GAL*** AND WHISKED HER AWAY RIGHT THRU THE BLAMED ***WALL***--

AND ***YOU*** WASTE TIME WITH A BUNCH'A DOPEY ***DOODLES!*** WHAT IN BLAZES IS THAT MESSED-UP ***MISHMASH*** SUPPOSED TO ***MEAN,*** ANYWAY??

IT'S ***SIMPLE,*** BEN! I'M MERELY STUDYING ALL OF THE DETAILED ***CIRCUITS***--AND TRYING TO ***ARRANGE*** THEM IN THE PROPER WORKING ***SEQUENCE!***

Recheck mini-circuit before testing!

enlarge .073%

YEAH? AND WHEN YER ***DONE***-- ***THEN*** WHAT?

calibrate all computations to nearest decimal!

THEN, WHEN THE COMPLETE UNIT IS ***ASSEMBLED,*** I HOPE TO HAVE IT OPERATE EXACTLY LIKE THE ONE ALICIA'S UNKNOWN ***ABDUCTOR*** WORE!

YA MEAN--YOU'LL MAKE THE ***SAME*** KINDA BRACELET-- AND WE CAN USE IT TO ***FOLLOW*** WHEREVER THEY WENT?

PRECISELY, BEN!

THEN WOTTA WE ***WAITIN'*** FOR?? ***KEEP WORKIN'!!***

IT WON'T BE LONG ***NOW,*** BIG FELLA!

AS SOON AS I RECEIVE THE NECESSARY ***COMPONENTS*** WHICH I ORDERED FROM THE FACTORY OF ***TONY STARK,*** WE'LL BE READY TO ***MOVE!***

BZZZZZ

SOMEONE'S AT THE ***DOOR!***

I'LL GO GIT ***RIDDA*** THE CREEP, ***WHOEVER*** HE IS!

I AINT LETTIN' ***NO ONE*** INTERRUPT YA ***NOW!***

GIT ***LOST,*** SQUIRT!

WHATEVER YER ***SELLIN'***, WE DON'T ***WANT*** ANY!

BEN--***HOLD IT!*** BACK ***AWAY*** FROM HIM!

AWW, ***NO!*** IS HE SOME ***NEW*** NUTTY FINK WE'RE GONNA HAVETA ***CLOBBER?***

OF ***COURSE*** NOT, YOU BELLICOSE BLOCKHEAD!!

THESE ARE THE ***MICRO-UNITS*** YOU ORDERED FROM ***TONY STARK,*** MR. RICHARDS!

SLIP INTO THIS ***DE-CONTAMINATION SUIT,*** BEN!

EVERYTHING IN THAT BOX IS ***STERILIZED***-- AND HIGHLY ***VOLITILE!***

SO ***THAT'S*** WHY THE CRAZY ***THREADS!***

MINUTES LATER--

WHAT'S SO BLASTED *IMPORTANT* ABOUT THAT THERE *BOX*, MISTER?

IT'S NOT THE *BOX*, BEN--

IT'S THE SUB-MINIATURE *COMPONENTS* WHICH IT CONTAINS!

LOOK!! THE BUILT-IN *AUTOMATIC TIMER* IS CAUSING IT TO *OPEN* NOW!!

THERE AINT *NOTHIN'* INSIDE-- 'CEPTING THEM LITTLE BLACK *DOTS!*

NOTICE WHAT'S *INSIDE--!*

THEY LOOK LIKE A BUNCHA MIXED-UP *FRECKLES* TO ME!

FRECKLES, YOU SAY--?

YEAH-- FRECKLES!! SO WHAT *ABOUT* IT?

WELL, MY FRENETIC FRIEND--THOSE *FRECKLES* AS YOU CALL THEM, WILL LEAD US DIRECTLY TO *ALICIA MASTERS!*

AWRIGHT--AWRIGHT!! JUST FER *ONCE*, LET'S DO SOMETHIN' WITHOUT YOU MAKIN' A *SPEECH* FIRST!

MEANWHILE, AS THE HEARTSICK *THING* CONTINUES TO RANT--TWO STUMBLING FIGURES DESPERATELY MAKE THEIR WAY THRU THE DREADED LABYRINTHS OF *LOCK 41*--IN WHAT IS POSSIBLY THE REMOTEST SPOT ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH--!

DON'T WORRY, ALICIA--I WON'T LET GO OF YOUR HAND!

IF *HE* WON'T LET US APPROACH HIM--HOW CAN I GET *CLOSE* ENOUGH TO MAKE A SCULPTURED *IMAGE* OF HIM AS I'M *SUPPOSED* TO?

HE MUST BE SOMEWHERE JUST *AHEAD* OF US--

I DON'T KNOW--BUT YOU *MUST* DO IT! WE *MUST* LEARN WHAT HE *LOOKS* LIKE!

AND HE'LL BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN *EVER* --SINCE HIS LAST *WARNING* DIDN'T DRIVE US *BACK!*

HOW *STRANGE*-- DEPENDING UPON A *BLIND* GIRL TO "*SEE*" WHAT NORMAL EYES COULD NEVER FATHOM!

IT'S ALL *MY* FAULT--MINE, AND THE OTHER THREE WHO *CREATED* HIM!

WE DARED TO TAMPER WITH *NATURE'S* GREATEST SECRET-- WE TRIED TO CREATE A NEW FORM OF *LIFE*--BUT WE COULDN'T *CONTROL* IT!

AND NOW HE'S *FREE*--POSSESSING GREATER *POWER* THAN ANYONE CAN IMAGINE!

AND WE'VE NO CHANCE TO *DESTROY* HIM TILL WE CAN LEARN WHAT HE *LOOKS* LIKE!

THAT BOX OF *CLAY* YOU CARRY OVER YOUR SHOULDER MAY BE THE ONLY THING THAT CAN *SAVE* MANKIND!

BLOOF!

LOOK OUT!! IT'S ANOTHER *BLAST*-- ANOTHER *WARNING*-- FROM--*HIM!!*

EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T *SEE* HIM--HE'S IN THERE *SOMEWHERE!*

I'VE *GOT* TO DESTROY HIM-- I'VE *GOT* TO!

BUT--YOU HAD TOLD ME--YOU, AND THE *OTHER* THREE--HAD TRIED TO CREATE A *PERFECT* LIVING BEING--TO START A *NEW RACE*--WITHOUT EVIL--WITHOUT SIN!!

WHY DON'T YOU-- GIVE IT A *CHANCE*--??

YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND!!* IT'S TOO *DANGEROUS*-- TOO *DEADLY!* WE HAD NO *RIGHT!*

IT POSSESSES *POWER WITHOUT LIMIT*--AND WE CAN'T *REACH* IT-- CAN'T *CONTROL* IT!!

IT'S HOPELESS-- *HOPELESS!*

HE'S CREATED A *MOLECULAR WALL* AROUND HIMSELF-- CAUSING MY OWN *BLASTS* TO REVERSE THEIR FIELD AND *REBOUND* BACK TO *US!!*

AND--SO GREAT IS HIS *ENERGY*-- THE *POWER* HE RADIATES--THAT NO *EYES* CAN HOPE TO *SEE* HIM--NO EYES CAN PENETRATE THE *GLARE!!*

DOWN!! STAY DOWN TILL THE FUSILLADE IS *OVER!*

I SHOULDN'T HAVE *LISTENED* TO THE OTHERS-- NEVER SHOULD HAVE *BROUGHT* YOU HERE! IT'S *MAD--HOPELESS--*

NO! *NO!* DON'T *SAY* THAT--!

WHAT IF HE *ISN'T* DANGEROUS!! WHAT IF HE *SHOULDN'T* BE DESTROYED?

WHAT IF HE'S JUST *FRIGHTENED --CONFUSED*--NOT KNOWING WHERE TO TURN--OR WHOM TO *TRUST?*

ALICIA!! STOP!! COME *BACK--!!*

NO! I MUST *GO* TO HIM--*REASON* WITH HIM! IT'S THE *ONLY* WAY--!!

LISTEN TO ME--WHOEVER YOU ARE-- *WHEREVER* YOU ARE--!

I WANT TO *HELP* YOU-- CAN YOU *HEAR* ME--??

HE--HE'S CAUSING *TENDRILS* TO RISE UP--FROM THE GROUND-- *TRAPPING* ME!!

THEY'RE HOLDING ME *BACK*--SO I CAN GO NO *FURTHER*--!

BUT NOTHING IS STOPPING *ALICIA!!* IT MEANS--HE *WANTS* HER TO REACH HIM--!!

ALICIA!! DON'T *DO* IT!! YOU CAN'T *SEE*--YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'RE *GOING*--AND I CAN'T--HELP YOU--!!

I'M NOT *AFRAID!*

I *MUST* GO ON--I MUST *FIND* HIM! IT'S TOO *LATE* TO TURN BACK!

AND--I CAN FEEL HIM *CALLING* TO ME! HE'LL SHOW ME THE WAY-- I *KNOW* HE WILL--!!

WHILE, IN THE VERY *HEART* OF THE COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC INSTALLATION, *THREE MEN* OBSERVE EVERYTHING THAT TRANSPIRES VIA A CLOSED-CIRCUIT TV SCANNER---

HAMILTON IS A *FOOL!* HE'S TRYING TO KEEP THE GIRL FROM GOING ANY *FURTHER!*

IF IT WERE IN MY POWER, I'D SILENCE HIM *FOREVER*-- RIGHT *NOW!*

STILL,IT IS A *TERRIBLE* THING WE HAVE DONE, MORLAK!

--SENDING AN UNSUSPECTING, SIGHTLESS FEMALE TO --HER *DEATH!*

IT SEEMS MURDER *BREEDS* MURDER!! WHERE WILL IT ALL *END??*

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE ALLOWED *WEAKLINGS* LIKE YOU TO *JOIN* ME!

THE *PLAN* WAS SO PERFECT--SO FOOL-PROOF! WE WOULD CREATE AN ENTIRE NEW *RACE*--A NEW *BREED* OF LIVING BEINGS--WHO WOULD *CONQUER MANKIND!*

BUT THEY'D BE RULED BY--*US ALONE!*

WE SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN* YOU WERE MAD--IF ONLY WE HADN'T BEEN BLINDED BY *GREED!!*

WE SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN* WE COULDN'T CONTROL SOMETHING SO SUPREMELY *POWERFUL!!*

IT *STILL* ISN'T HOPELESS!

WHILE *YOU* TWO HAVE BEEN FRETTING AND WRINGING YOUR HANDS, I'VE BEEN *WORKING*--WORKING ON A LAST-DITCH *EMERGENCY MEASURE!*

WHAT *IS* IT, SHINSKI? WHAT MAD *SCHEME* OF YOURS CAN *POSSIBLY* SAVE US *NOW?*

LET US HEAR HIM OUT!! IF THE *GIRL* SHOULD FAIL US--IF SHE SHOULD *PERISH* WITHIN *LOCK 41*--

--THEN *ANY* PLAN IS BETTER THAN REMAINING *HERE*-- TO AWAIT OUR *DOOM!*

QUICKLY, COME WITH ME TO *LEVEL SEVEN!*

I WILL *SHOW* YOU WHAT I HAVE *DONE!*

WE HAVE NOTHING TO *LOSE!* LET'S *GO,* MORLAK!

INTO THE *VACUUM CAR* THEN!

I DO NOT WISH TO BE AWAY FROM THE *TV SCANNER* FOR LONG!

WITHIN SECONDS, OPERATING ON SILENT *VACUUM POWER*, THE THREE-SEATER VEHICLE SPEEDS TOWARDS *LEVEL SEVEN*--TRAVERSING THE MANY LEVELS OF THE SECRET *CITADEL OF SCIENCE*--THAT GREAT, HIDDEN COMPLEX OF TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT, WHICH STANDS LIKE A GIANT *BEEHIVE* UPON THE MOST REMOTE AREA OF EARTH--!

EVEN *NOW*, IT IS HARD TO SEE WHERE, OR *HOW* WE FAILED!

WITH THE LIMITLESS *WEALTH* OUR SCIENTIFIC *PATENTS* HAD BROUGHT US, WE HAD ONLY TO CREATE *ONE* ALL-POWERFUL BEING--AND THEN *DUPLICATE* HIM, BY THE COUNTLESS *THOUSANDS!*

AND WE *DID* CREATE HIM!

BUT OUR GREATEST MISTAKE--OUR GREATEST *FAILURE*--WAS IN THE *CONTROL* APPARATUS--!

TRUE! WE MADE HIM *SO* POWERFUL THAT EVEN *WE* CANNOT CONTROL HIM!

AND *THAT*, GENTLEMEN, IS EXACTLY THE *REASON* I TOOK THE PRE-CAUTION OF CREATING THE NEW *ANTI-GRAVITY TRANSMITTER* WHICH IS BEHIND THIS DOOR!

ANTI-GRAVITY? WHAT GOOD WILL *THAT* DO US IF *HE* BREAKS FREE??

STEP *INSIDE*, AND I WILL *SHOW* YOU!

SHOULD ALL *ELSE* FAIL, WE NEED MERELY PLUNGE THIS *DETONATOR*--

AND THE *POWER SOURCE* BENEATH WILL SEND AN *ULTRONIC WAVE* WHICH WILL SURROUND *HIM*--AND DRAW HIM INSTANTLY INTO THE FURTHEST REACHES OF *OUTER SPACE!*

PERFECT!! HE CAN NO LONGER *MENACE* US IF HE NO LONGER *EXISTS* HERE ON EARTH!

THEN WE'LL BE FREE TO TRY *AGAIN*--A SECOND TIME!

AND *NEXT* TIME--*WE SHALL NOT FAIL!*

BUT NOW, AS EVENTS RAPIDLY REACH THE *CRITICAL* POINT, WE RETURN ONCE MORE TO *FF HEADQUARTERS*, WHERE WE FIND THE LOVELY *CRYSTAL* SERVING BREAKFAST TO *JOHNNY STORM* WHO HAS ARRIVED AT THE CRACK OF DAWN IN ANSWER TO THE URGENT SUMMONS OF *MR. FANTASTIC*--*

WHEN I GOT REED'S *CALL*, I THOUGHT IT WAS AN *EMERGENCY!*

WHERE *IS* HE, ANYWAY, CRYS?

IN THE *LAB* WITH THE *THING*, JOHNNY! THEY'VE BEEN WORKING ALL NIGHT!

YOUR *SISTER* HAS BEEN *HELPING* THEM FOR THE PAST FEW HOURS!

SAY! THIS TOAST ISN'T *HOT* ENOUGH!

*AND IF YOU CAN FIND A LONGER SENTENCE THAN *THAT* ONE IN ANY COMICS MAG, CONSIDER YOURSELF NO-PRIZED!--SOLILOQUIST STAN.

HERE--*THIS* IS THE WAY I *LIKE* IT!

ZZZZZZ

JOHNNNY!

AHHH--*THAT'S* MORE LIKE IT!

HONESTLY, JOHNNY STORM--YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY *IMPOSSIBLE!!* YOU *SCARED* ME HALF TO DEATH!!

WELL, HAVEN'T YOU ANYTHING TO *SAY* TO ME??

YEP!

I'M *MAAAAAAAD* ABOUT YOU!

--*OH!!*

UHH--*HI*, BEN--AND SUE!

I, EH--DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE *THERE!*

YEAH! WE KINDA *FIGGERED* THAT, JUNIOR!

REED SAID WE SHOULDN'T *WAIT* FOR HIM! HE HIT A NEW *PROBLEM* IN THE LAB!

SO, IF BEN AND I MAY *JOIN* YOU--?

OH--OF *COURSE*, MRS. RICHARDS! WE WERE--*WAITING* FOR YOU--!

AT LEAST YOU DIDN'T SEEM TO BE TOO *BORED!*

HOW COME AN URGENT *CALL* FROM MY BRAINY BROTHER-IN-LAW, SIS?

I FIGURED WE WERE ALL SET FOR *ACTION!*

HE EXPECTS TO *FINISH* HIS LAB WORK AT ANY MOMENT, JOHNNY--AND WANTS US ALL *ASSEMBLED* HERE WHEN HE DOES!

IF YA ASK *ME*, HE'S POPPED HIS *CORK!*

I BEEN WATCHIN' 'IM ALL *NIGHT*--PICKIN' UP A LOTTA *NOTHIN'* WITH TWEEZERS, 'N HOOKIN' IT ONTO *ANOTHER* BUNCHA NOTHIN'!!

COME *OFF* IT, YOU BLUE-EYED *PHONY!*

THOSE SPECKS OF *NOTHING* ARE TINY *MICRO-CIRCUITS*--AND YOU *KNOW* IT, BIG MAN!

SURE I KNOW IT, KID! AND I KNOW HOW REED'S BEEN KNOCKIN' HIMSELF OUT TO HELP US FIND *ALICIA!*

BUT I'M SO SICK WITH *WORRY* FOR THAT KID, THAT I GOTTA GRIPE ABOUT *SOMETHIN'* OR JUST PLAIN *CRACK UP!*

YOU'LL FEEL *BETTER* AS SOON AS I SET SOME OF THESE INSTANT *WHEAT CAKES* IN FRONT OF YOU, BEN DEAR!

HERE! YOUR FAVORITE BREAKFAST! RED-HOT--RIGHT OFF THE *GRIDDLE!*

AND I SMOTHERED THEM IN *BUTTER*--JUST THE WAY YOU *LIKE* THEM!

NUTS!! I'M TOO *HUNG-UP* TO THINK OF *FOOD!*

WELLLLL--MEBBE I'LL JUST TAKE A *BITE*--SO'S I CAN KEEP BODY 'N SOUL TOGETHER!

I DON'T WANNA HURTCHA *FEELIN'S* AFTER ALL YER TROUBLE, SUSIE!

OH -- REED!

IT'S *FINISHED!* WE HAVE A *WRIST BAND* TO *NOWHERE!*

DOES THAT MEAN--WE'LL BE ABLE TO GO AFTER *ALICIA??*

DOES IT??

I *HOPE* SO, BIG FELLA! I KNOW WHAT THIS *MEANS* TO YOU!

JUST LET ME HAVE A BITE--AND WE'LL GET *STARTED!*

IF IT WUZ *YOUR* GAL, YOU'D BE STARTIN' *NOW!!*

STOW IT, BEN! HE HASN'T EATEN --OR SHUT HIS EYES--IN OVER *TWO DAYS!*

OKAY--OKAY--I'M *SORRY!* DON'T GO JUMPIN' DOWN MY *THROAT,* BLAST IT!

FORGET IT, OLD FRIEND! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL!

CAN'T A GUY EVEN OPEN HIS *MOUTH* AROUND HERE?!!

WARM UP THE *MICRO-TOOL ASSEMBLY UNIT*--SO THAT WE DON'T WASTE A SECOND!

AND, EVEN AS A DESPERATELY WEARY *REED RICHARDS* HUNGRILY DRAINS THE CUP THAT HE HOLDS--

I HEAR A *VOICE*--GUIDING ME--LEADING ME ON!!

IT MUST BELONG TO--*HIM!!*

I CAN SENSE--THE *GOODNESS*--IN YOUR HEART!

I *TRUST* YOU--YOU MUST *COME* TO ME--YOU MUST *HELP* ME!

I *HATE* THE OTHERS!! THEY ARE *EVIL*--THEY MEAN ONLY *HARM!*

BUT *YOU* ARE--DIFFERENT!

I CANNOT *SEE!!* I CAN NO LONGER TELL WHERE YOUR VOICE IS *COMING* FROM!

WALK STRAIGHT AHEAD--DO NOT FEAR--I AM NOT FAR AWAY!

I DO NOT KNOW--WHAT YOU MEAN--BY *SEE*--

BUT, I AM *CLOSE* TO YOU--I AM DIRECTLY IN *FRONT* OF YOU--YOU ARE SO *SMALL*--SO *WEAK*--!

EVEN THOUGH I CANNOT *SEE* YOU, I SENSE SOMETHING *WRONG!*

DESPITE YOUR GREAT *POWER*--YOU ARE IN NEED OF *HELP!*

I MUST REACH OUT--I MUST *TOUCH* YOU--SO THAT I MAY *UNDER-STAND*--

NOW--AT LAST--I WILL *KNOW*--!

YOU--YOU HAVE *NO FORM!* YOU ARE ENCASED *WITHIN* SOMETHING--SOMETHING THAT TINGLES WITH *LIFE*-- AND YET IS *NOT* ALIVE--!

I AM ABOUT TO--BE *BORN!*

THAT WHICH YOU FEEL--IS MY *COCOON!* --IT IS SOON TO *OPEN*--AND THEN--

--THEN-- I SHALL *EMERGE!!*

BUT NOW-- A *WEAKNESS*-- OVERTAKES ME! --I AM SO *ALONE* --SO *HELPLESS!!*

DON'T BE AFRAID!! *I* WILL STAY WITH YOU!

I HAVE KNOWN *ANOTHER* LIKE YOU--ONE WHO IS *ALSO* POWERFUL --BUT WHO NEEDS UNDERSTANDING --AND COMPASSION!

FOR THE SAKE OF THE *LOVE* I FEEL FOR HIM-- *I WILL NOT DESERT YOU!*

WHILE, IN WHAT SEEMS TO BE ANOTHER WORLD--

HOW CAN THIS BE THE WRIST BAND, REED?

ALL I SEE IS A STRIP OF MAGNETIZED TAPE, COVERED WITH A SERIES OF TINY FLY-SPECKS!

THOSE FLY SPECKS, AS YOU CALL THEM, DARLING, ARE THE KEY TO THE MYSTERY!

YEAH! SUSIE'S RIGHT!

THEY'RE PART OF THE MINIATURIZED PRINTED CIRCUIT WHICH GIVES THE BRACELET ITS DIRECTIONAL POWER!

ALL I NEED DO IS PLACE THE STRIP OF TAPE WITHIN THIS MICRO-TOOL ASSEMBLY UNIT--

--AND THE MICROSCOPIC PROBES WHICH I'VE JUST ACTIVATED WILL DO THE REST! --WATCH!

KLK

ZT!

FIZZT!

IT'S DONE! WE'VE CREATED AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF THE ELECTRONIC BRACELET WHICH ALICIA'S ABDUCTOR WORE!

THE LONG WAIT IS OVER!! WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

THAT'S WHAT I BEEN WAITIN' TO HEAR!!

OH, REED! AT LAST WE'LL BE ABLE TO FIND ALICIA--AND TO BRING HER BACK AGAIN!

NO, DARLING--NOT WE!

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT DANGERS AWAIT US--AND I CAN'T LET YOU FACE THEM-- NOT YOU-- NOT NOW!

BUT, REED-- WHAT IF YOU NEED ME--?

C'MON, LADY! DON'TCHA KNOW THAT TONE IN HIS VOICE BY NOW?

YOU AINT GONNA CHANGE HIS MIND--AND WE'RE JUST WASTIN' TIME!

I WANT YOU TO STAY HERE ALSO, CRYS--TO LOOK AFTER SUE!

JOHNNY--IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN! --IF YOU DON'T RETURN--!

THIS ISN'T A REQUEST--OR A SUGGESTION! IT'S AN ORDER! YOU'LL REMAIN HERE--TILL WE RETURN!

NOTHING CAN KEEP ME FROM COMING BACK TO YOU--NOT EVER!!

STAND CLOSE TO ME, AS I GRASP YOUR WRISTS-- JUST AS THE STRANGER DID TO ALICIA!

THE ENERGY FROM THE BRACELET'S CIRCUITS WILL FLOW THRU THE THREE OF US!

MEBBE WE OUGHTTA DO THIS IN HER APARTMENT-- THE PLACE WHERE SHE VANISHED FROM?

WHATEVER HAPPENS-- STAY BESIDE ME!!

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE WE DEPART FROM, BEN.! THE BRACELET'S CIRCUITRY WILL BRING US TO THE SAME DESTINATION!

I FEEL MY WRIST STARTING TO TINGLE--LIKE AN ELECTRIC SHOCK --GOING THRU MY WHOLE BODY--!

ZIZZT!

THEY'RE GONE--VANISHED-- THE SAME WAY ALICIA VANISHED!!

BUT WHERE?? WHERE ARE THEY?? WHERE??

IT MUST BE SOME FORM OF DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL--

SUCH AS THE WAY THE INHUMANS HAVE TRANSPORTED THEMSELVES--AIDED BY THE POWER OF OUR DOG--LOCKJAW!

AND, DEEP WITHIN THE INCREDIBLE BEEHIVE WHICH HOUSES THE HIDDEN CITADEL OF SCIENCE--

THE TRANSFER GRID IS BEGINNING TO GLOW!

ALL ELEMENTS ARE SET FOR AUTO-MATIC ENTRY!!

BUT--IT ISN'T POSSIBLE!!

THERE'S ONLY ONE WRIST BAND IN ALL THE WORLD-- AND IT'S LOCKED WITHIN OUR VAULT!!

WRONG!! WHATEVER ONE MIND CAN CREATE-- ANOTHER BRAIN CAN DUPLICATE!!

GUARDS! ALL AROUND US!

FLAME ON!

WHERE IS SHE?? WHERE'S ALICIA?!!

LET'S GET 'EM, GANG!

I'LL DRAW THEIR FIRE WHILE I IMPRISON THEM WITHIN A CIRCLE OF FLAME--!

I RECOGNIZE THEM!! THEY'RE PART OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!! WE MUST GET WORD TO MORLAK--AND THE OTHERS!!

IT'S AN INVASION! --SOUND THE ALARM!

THE ONLY WORDS YOU'LL HAVE TIME FOR ARE THE ONES WE WANT TO HEAR--!!

DON'T BOTHER ASKIN' 'EM, STRETCHO!

BY THE TIME I'M DONE WITH EM, THEY'LL BE BEGGIN' US TO GIVE 'EM A LISTEN!

WHERE IS THE GIRL-- ALICIA?!!

I'M WARNING YOU--IF THE THING EVER GETS HIS HANDS ON YOU, YOU'LL WISH YOU HAD ANSWERED MY QUESTION!!

AWRIGHT, YOU WHININ', WEAK-KNEED CREEPS!

YER ALL PRETTY TOUGH WHEN IT COMES TO CAPTURIN' A HELPLESS, BLIND GIRL, HUH?

SO LET'S SEE HOW YA ARE NOW-- WHEN IT GITS TO BE--

CLOBBERIN' TIME!!

BACK! GET BACK!! NOTHING CAN STOP HIM!

HE'S LIKE A LIVING DREADNAUGHT!! HE--HE CAN'T BE HUMAN!!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, DEEP WITHIN THE VASTNESS OF *LOCK 41*, THE GRASPING *TENTACLES* SUDDENLY FALL AWAY AND VANISH AS THE MAN CALLED *HAMILTON* FINDS HIMSELF *FREE* AGAIN--

THE TENTACLES WERE CREATED AND CONTROLLED BY--*HIM!*

IF THEY'VE SUDDENLY *DISAPPEARED* --IT CAN ONLY MEAN--SOMETHING HAS *HAPPENED* IN THERE!

I'VE GOT TO LEARN WHAT IT *IS*--GOT TO FIND THE *GIRL*--!

I JUST REALIZED-- THE *BLINDING GLOW*-- IT'S *FADED AWAY!*

FOR THE FIRST TIME--I CAN *SEE* WHERE HE IS!

ALICIA-- SHE'S *SAFE*-- BUT-- WHAT'S *THAT*--??

IT'S *HIM!!* IN HIS *COCOON FORM!!*

WE *THOUGHT* HE WOULD TAKE LIFE THIS WAY-- THO' WE WERE NEVER *CERTAIN!!*

BUT--IT'S *TOO SOON!!* HE SHOULDN'T HAVE BROKEN FREE OF THE *LIFE TANK* TILL WE WERE *READY!*

GET *BACK*, GIRL! *QUICKLY*--BEFORE HE ENTERS THE *FINAL PHASE*--!!

NO! YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* HE'S WEAK-- HE'S TERRIBLY *ILL!!*

YOU'RE A *DOCTOR!!* YOU CAN'T JUST *LEAVE* HIM LIKE THIS--!! HE NEEDS *HELP!*

IT'S *TOO LATE*-- TOO LATE FOR *ANYTHING!!*

HE'S IN THE ULTIMATE *TRANSITIONAL PHASE*-- ABOUT TO BE *BORN!!*

WITHIN A MATTER OF *SECONDS* HE'LL UNDERGO HIS LONG-AWAITED *METAMORPHASIS*--!

BUT--ISN'T THAT YOUR *PLAN?* ISN'T THAT THE WAY IT WAS *SUPPOSED* TO BE?

NO!! WE WERE SUPPOSED TO *CONTROL* HIM--TO BE HIS *MASTERS*-- TO HAVE HIM *SERVE* US!

BUT NOW--HIS COCOON IS ABOUT TO DRY AND *DROP AWAY*--AND *NO ONE KNOWS WHAT WILL EMERGE!*

BUT, ONE THING WE *DO* KNOW--

WHATEVER *FORM* HE MAY TAKE--*NO ONE* WILL BE ABLE TO *STOP* HIM!!

WHAT WE DID WAS ***WRONG--EVIL--INSANE!!***

I ABANDONED EVERYTHING I HAD ***WORKED*** FOR--MY REPUTATION--MY HOME--MY MEDICAL PRACTICE--BECAUSE OF A MAD DESIRE TO ONE DAY ***RULE THE WORLD--*** TO MAKE ***OTHER*** HUMANS MY ***SLAVES!***

I WAS WILLING TO ***SACRIFICE*** ALL MANKIND--SO THAT ***I,*** AND MY OTHER THREE FELLOW-MURDERERS, COULD BE ***SUPREME!***

BUT ***NOW--*** EVEN IF IT MEANS MY ***DEATH--*** I MUST DESTROY--***HIM!!***

THEN--YOU ***LIED*** TO ME--I WAS BROUGHT HERE--TO HELP--A TEAM OF WOULD-BE ***TYRANTS!***

OF ***COURSE!!*** AND, WE WERE WILLING TO SACRIFICE ***YOU*** TOO, IN ORDER--

UNHH!

I'VE ***FAILED!!*** HE ***SENSED*** MY INTENTION! HE STOPPED ME WITH A LIGHTNING-SWIFT ***ENERGY*** BLAST

--A BLAST WHICH IS CAUSING THE COCOON TO ***DISSOLVE!!***

NOTHING CAN PREVENT HIM--FROM ***EMERGING--*** NOW--!

AND, EVEN AS THE AWESOME COCOON SLOWLY BEGINS TO ***PART--***

THEY ***TOLD*** ME WHAT WE WANNA ***KNOW!***

SOME CREEP TOOK ALICIA INTO SOME KINDA ***TUNNEL--!***

THEY CALL IT ***LOCK 41--*** WHATEVER ***THAT*** MEANS!

IT'S ON THE ***OTHER SIDE*** OF HERE, BEN! LET'S ***TAKE OFF!***

BEN! JOHNNY! WE HAVE TO FIND LOCK 41--THAT'S WHERE ALICIA IS!

TRY TELLIN' US SOMETHIN WE DON'T KNOW, EGG-HEAD!

WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' FOR??

HEY! ARE YOU TRYIN' TA TAKE POT SHOTS OUTTA MY BIG-TALKIN' BUDDY??

THAT'S REAL UNFRIENDLY OF YA, SONNY!

NOW, YOU'RE GONNA MAKE UP BY TAKIN' US TO LOCK 41-- OR DO YA WANT I SHOULD SAY PRETTY PLEASE?

I'LL DO IT! UMPFF! I'LL DO IT!

YEAH! I KINDA FIGGERED YA WOULD!

SECONDS LATER--(26 SECONDS, TO BE EXACT--FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO COLLECT SUCH SOUL-STIRRING STATISTICS!)

IT'S UP AHEAD! I SEE IT!

NOW AINT YOU THE CLEVER, SHARP-EYED SWEETIE?!!

FASTER, CHARLIE-- LESS'N YA WANT A INSTANT FACE LIFT!

WE'RE THERE! EVERYBODY OUT!

I HEAR YA TALKIN', HAMBONE!

LOCK 41

THUMF!

STAY BACK! I'LL BURN OUR WAY THRU--!

OKAY, GROUP! LET'S START MAKING LIKE HEROES!

WHILE, A FEW HUNDRED YARDS AHEAD--

THE ENERGY BUILD-UP IS INCREASING BY THE SECOND!

HE'S FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN WE EVER DREAMED HE'D BE!

RUN, ALICIA-- TRY TO ESCAPE!

I DESERVE WHATEVER HAPPENS TO ME--BUT YOU--!

I CAN'T!! I DON'T KNOW--IN WHICH DIRECTION--!

THE FEMALE NEED NOT FEAR!!

NO HARM SHALL COME TO HER!

BUT, ALL OTHERS MUST PAY-- FOR THE EVIL THEY HAD PLANNED!!

NO! YOU MUSTN'T!! HAMILTON--TRIED TO HELP--!

IT'S TOO LATE! I-I'M DONE FOR! IT'S--BETTER THIS WAY--!

I COULD NEVER-- HAVE LIVED WITH MYSELF--KNOWING --WHAT I HAD DONE!

HE--IS WISER-- THAN ANY-- OF US--!

MY FATE--IS ASSURED!! BUT WHAT--WILL HAPPEN--TO THE REST OF--MANKIND?? WHAT--UHHHHHHH...

HE--HE'S DEAD--!

AND I'M ALONE--IN A STRANGE-- EVIL PLACE-- SURROUNDED BY-- UNKNOWN DANGERS--!!

YOU AINT ALONE ANY MORE, BABY--!!

AND, 'LONG AS I CAN DO ANYTHIN' ABOUT IT--YA NEVER WILL BE AGAIN!

BEN!! MY DARLING-- IT'S YOU!! YOU'VE COME FOR ME!!

IT'S LIKE A DREAM!! HOW-- HOW DID YOU EVER FIND ME?

NEVER MIND THAT NOW, ALICIA!

WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE--BUT FAST!!

I CAN'T ABSORB ANY MORE ENERGY BURSTS FOR YOU-- WITH MY BLAZING BODY!

MY FLAME'S GOING OUT-- ALREADY--!

REED! WHAT'S IN THERE? WHAT'S CAUSING ALL OF THIS??

I DON'T KNOW, JOHNNY--BUT WHATEVER IT IS, IT POSSESSES MORE NAKED POWER THAN ANY LIVING BEING HAS A RIGHT TO CONTROL!

THE KID FAINTED--BUT SHE'S OKAY! D'YA HEAR ME? ALICIA'S OKAY!

AS LONG AS SHE AINT BEEN HARMED --AS LONG AS SHE'S ALIVE--I'LL FIND SOME WAY TO GIT US OUTTA HERE!

WE'VE GOT TO FIND THAT WAY, BEN--AND NOW!

FEEL THE GROUND SHAKE? THE ENERGY BUILD-UP IS STILL GROWING!

THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT!

AND WE DARE NOT REMAIN HERE TO FIGHT IT--BECAUSE ALICIA'S SAFETY COMES FIRST!

OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO REACH THE ESCAPE GRID THRU WHICH WE ENTERED!

WE'LL REACH IT, MISTER!

AINT NOTHIN' ALIVE CAN STOP US NOW!

WHILE, AT AN ELECTRONIC VIEW-SCREEN, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE MYSTERIOUS BEEHIVE--

IT'S THE FANTASTIC FOUR! I'D KNOW THEM ANYWHERE!

THEY ARE OF NO CONCERN TO US!

MORLAK IS RIGHT! OUR ONLY DANGER WILL COME FROM--HIM!

BUT, HOW--?

SEE HOW THEY FLEE IN PANIC!

CLICK

WHAT ABOUT YOUR ANTI-GRAVITY TRANSMITTER?? YOU SAID IT WOULD HURL HIM INTO SPACE!!

ONCE WE USE IT, ALL OUR WORK WILL HAVE BEEN IN VAIN! WE'LL HAVE TO START ALL OVER AGAIN! ALL THOSE YEARS--WASTED!

WE'VE NO OTHER CHOICE! HE COULD DESTROY US ALL!

WE'VE *ROBBED*--AND *CHEATED*--AND TURNED *TRAITOR!!* WE'VE EVEN CLOSED OUR EYES TO *MURDER!* AND NOW--*THIS* IS OUR PAYOFF--!

WE MUST *WIPE OUT* THE VERY THING THAT WAS TO MAKE US *MASTERS* OF ALL MANKIND!

SKIP THE *SPEECHES*, YOU OLD FOOL--AND DO WHAT MUST BE *DONE!*

THE *MEN!* WHAT WILL *THEY* DO TO US--?

WE MADE THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST CREW OF *CUTTHROATS* SERVE US --BY PROMISES OF GREAT *REWARDS!*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY DEMAND-- THEIR *PAYMENT?!?*

I--DON'T *UNDER-STAND!!* I PUSHED THE *PLUNGER*, BUT--

THERE WAS NO CONTACT!! THE POWER IS *DEAD!!*

WE SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN!!* IT WAS *HIM*-- HE CAN READ OUR *MINDS*-- *HE* DID IT!

WITH NOTHING MORE THAN A *THOUGHT*-- HE *NEUTRALIZED* YOUR TRANSMITTER!!

THAT MEANS-- *ALL* OF US--ARE *DOOMED!*

KROOM

HE'S COMING CLOSER-- *CLOSER--!*

THE *GRID!* WE'VE GOT TO REACH THE *GRID!*

BUT, THE THREE COLD-BLOODED CONSPIRATORS ARE THOUSANDS OF YARDS FROM THEIR DESTINATION-- WHILE OUR FAR-FAMED, FLEEING FRIENDS ARE ALMOST *UPON* IT--!

AS SOON AS WE *GET* THERE, *RUN*--

DON'T WASTE A *SECOND!*

WHY DON'T THOSE *GUARDS* TRY TO ESCAPE THRU THE GRID, THEM-SELVES?

THEY MAY NOT *YET* BE AWARE OF THE TOTAL *DANGER*--

AND *ALSO*, THERE'S PROBABLY *ONE* ESCAPE BRACELET--HELD BY WHOMEVER IS IN *CHARGE* OF THIS PLACE!

WELL, I GUESS WE CAN'T WASTE TIME WORRYING ABOUT *THEM*--

YOU'RE BLAMED *RIGHT* WE CAN'T--

SEEIN' AS HOW THEY'RE WORKIN' FOR THE GUTLESS *GOONS* WHO CAPTURED *ALICIA!*

MORLAK!! FIND MORLAK!! ONLY *HE* CAN HELP US NOW!

AND, AS THE DESPERATE, SHOUTING, UNIFORMED *ASSASSINS* BEGIN THEIR FUTILE SEARCH FOR THEIR LEADER--

HANG ON! WE'RE GOING *THRU--!*

IT'S *NO USE!* WE'LL *NEVER* MAKE IT! THERE ISN'T *TIME*-- HE'S ALMOST *UPON* US!

THAT UNEARTHLY *GLOW*--IN *FRONT* OF US!! IT'S *HIM!!* HE'S *FOUND* US!

THE MONSTER HAS *CAUGHT* US--AT LAST!

MONSTER?? WHATEVER *ELSE* HE MAY BE--*HE ISN'T A MONSTER!*

HE'S EVERYTHING WE *WANTED* HIM TO BE-- AND *MORE*--FAR, FAR *MORE!!!*

SO! 'TIS *YOU* WHO WERE--MY *CREATORS!*

I KNOW THE TRUE NATURE OF YOUR EVIL PLANS!

THEREFORE, I HAVE NO RELUCTANCE TO DO-- WHAT *MUST* BE DONE--!

THIS PLANET OF *HUMANS* IS NOT FOR *ME*--NOT *YET*--NOT TILL ANOTHER *MILLINIUM* HAS PASSED!

THUS, I SHALL TAKE MY *LEAVE*--

NO! WAIT! IF YOU HARNESS ENOUGH *ENERGY* TO DEPART-- YOU'LL DESTROY US *ALL!*

DOES THE *TIGER* CONCERN HIMSELF-- ABOUT THE *FLEA?*

MANKIND WILL NEVER KNOW THAT I HAVE *SAVED* IT FROM THE MENACE OF THIS HIDDEN, HUMAN *BEEHIVE*--

BUT, SOME DAY, A HALF-REMEMBERED *LEGEND* MAY TELL OF THE TIME--

--THE TIME A *COCOON* BURST OPEN--PROVING IN ONE CATACLYSMIC MOMENT, THAT THE *CHILD*-- IS FATHER TO THE *MAN!*

NEXT

MISSION: *DESTROY THE F.F.!*

FANTASTIC FOUR SPECIAL

ALL NEW!

NOT A SINGLE REPRINT!

KING-SIZE SPECIAL!

Fantastic Four™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

FEATURING: THE INHUMANS! THE BLACK PANTHER! AND A MOST SURPRISING ANNOUNCEMENT FROM MR. FANTASTIC!

OH BY THE WAY, WE HAVE A GREAT NEW VILLAIN, TOO!

SPECIAL BONUS... THE SILVER SURFER! A COMPLETE FEATURE LENGTH THRILLER!

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MCG T

THE FABULOUS F.F. ANNOUNCE THE BIGGEST SURPRISE OF THE YEAR!

"DIVIDE.. AND CONQUER!"

ANOTHER SPELLBINDING SPECTACULAR BY:
STAN (THE MAN) LEE and JACK (KING) KIRBY
INKED BY JOLTIN' JOE SINNOTT LETTERED BY SWINGIN' SAMMY ROSEN

THE LOVELY SUE RICHARDS HAS SUDDENLY FAINTED! HER HUSBAND, REED, GENTLY LIFTS HER IN HIS ARMS..
AND THAT'S ALL THE INTRO YOU'RE GONNA NEED!

FEATURING:
THE INDOMITABLE INHUMANS!
THE BEDAZZLING BLACK PANTHER!
THE PSYCHO-MAN!
AND THE MOST FRENETIC, DOUBLE-LENGTH FREE-FOR-ALL THAT YOU CAN SHAKE A FORBUSH AT..!

HEY, DOC...YA BETTER GET UP HERE, *FAST!* IT'S *SUSIE*... SHE JUST WENT *KERPLUNK!*

HUH? WADDAYA *MEAN* YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND? *KER-PLUNK! K-E-R-PLUNK!* YEAH, *THAT'S* IT!

REED.. LOOK! SHE'S COMING AROUND!

BUT, WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT *HAPPENED* TO HER?

SHE DID NOT *SEEM* TO BE ILL DURING DINNER! IT HAPPENED SO *SUDDENLY!*

REED.. JOHNNY.. EVERYONE... *FORGIVE* ME! I..I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE.. SUCH A BOTHER...!

JUST LIE QUIETLY, DARLING! THE *DOCTOR* WILL BE HERE SOON!

DOCTOR? OH NO...I DON'T *NEED* A DOCTOR..!

IT WAS PROBABLY JUST THE *HEAT!* I'M FEELING *FINE* NOW!

GOSH, YOU SURE GAVE US A *SCARE,* SIS!

OKAY, I TOLD THE DOC TO *FERGET* IT!

SHEESH! I NEVER KNOWED *ANYONE* WHO COULD GIT SO *MUSHY* AT THE DROP OF A HAT!

SUE, DEAREST...IF ANYTHING SHOULD *HAPPEN* TO YOU, I.. I..I CAN'T, EVEN *SAY* IT!

THEY NEED *ME* IN THERE LIKE *JOHNNY* NEEDS A *MATCH!*

I MIGHT AS WELL *CUT OUT* BEFORE STRETCHO DECIDES IT'S TIME FER US TO GO 'N' *SAVE THE WORLD* AGAIN!

THE *POGO PLANE'S* OUT FER REPAIRS, BUT THAT'S OKAY...

IT'S MORE FUN SCOOTIN' AROUND ON THE *JET CYCLE,* ANYHOW!

I'LL SEE IF *ALICIA'S* HOME...MEBBE SHE WANTSA GO FER A SPIN!

BUT, THE UNSUSPECTING *THING* MIGHT *CHANGE* HIS COURSE IF HE KNEW WHAT WAS *HAPPENING* NOT FAR AWAY...

IN A CAREFULLY LOCKED, COMPLETELY SOUNDPROOF BUILDING, A DESPERATE MAN RECOILS IN FEAR AT THE SIGHT OF THE FIGURE BEFORE HIM... THE FIGURE HE CALLS...

PSYCHO-MAN! NO! DON'T DO IT! I'VE BEEN LOYAL TO YOU! YOU'VE GOTTA BELIEVE ME!

SILENCE, YOU ABOMINABLE WEAKLING! YOU HAVE FAILED ME!

IT WAS YOUR TASK TO DELIVER COMPONENT FIVE...

BUT YOU DELIVERED IT TO THE WRONG ADDRESS!

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE! PLEASE! PLEASE!..!!

NO..YOU CAN'T! DON'T USE THE PSYCHO RAY ON ME! NOT THAT--!

YOU KNOW THE PRICE OF FAILURE! YOUR COWARDLY CRIES ARE USELESS!

FEAR

DOUBT

HATE

THOUGH PSYCHO-MAN IS MASTER OF ALL EMOTIONS.. I AM A STRANGER TO THE EMOTION OF--PITY!

NOOOOO..!

ZZZZT!!

I SAW YOU PRESS THE FEAR BUTTON! I--I KNOW THERE'S NOTHING HERE--!

BUT, I CAN'T HELP MYSELF! THE THINGS I NOW SEE SEEM REAL!

THEY'RE COMING FOR ME..REACHING OUT...I'VE GOTTA GET AWAY ..ESCAPE..!

KRA-SH!

DON'T LET THEM GET ME! NO! NO! NOOOOO!

HE LANDED ON THE LEDGE BELOW! WHEN HE RECOVERS--- IN THE HOSPITAL...NO ONE WILL BELIEVE HIS STORY! THEY'LL THINK HE'S MAD!

NOW, LIVE WIRE... IVAN--AND SHELL-SHOCK! COME IN AND CLEAN UP THIS MESS!

LOOK, MISTER! NOBODY TALKS TO US LIKE WE'RE FLUNKIES... NOT EVEN YOU!

WE ARE YOUR PARTNERS---NOT YOUR SLAVES! OUR WEAPONS ARE AS MIGHTY AS YOURS!

AND WHAT LIVE WIRE AND IVAN JUST SAID GOES FOR ME, TOO!

FOOLS! YOU COMPARE YOURSELVES TO PSYCHO-MAN ---ATTACK ME---DO YOUR WORST!

HE'S BLUFFING! HE THINKS WE WOULDN'T DARE!

LET 'IM HAVE IT, LIVE WIRE!

MY GUN---AS WELL AS MY LARIAT---IS ELECTRIFIED! IT'LL KNOCK 'IM FOR A LOOP!

ZAKK!

DID YOU THINK I WEAR THIS ARMOR MERELY FOR SHOW?

NONE OF YOUR INSIPID WEAPONS CAN HARM PSYCHO-MAN!

BUT, NOW SEE WHAT I CAN DO---AT THE MERE TOUCH OF A BUTTON--!

YOU SHALL LEARN A LESSON--IN OBEDIENCE-- THAT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!

DOUBT

KLIK!

SECONDS LATER, THE THREE POWERFUL, SUPREMELY-CONFIDENT MEN WHO HAD FACED HIM ARE REDUCED TO QUIVERING, PLEADING, PITIFUL CREATURES OF *DOUBT*... DOUBTING THEIR POWER, THEIR PURPOSE, THEIR EVERY MOVE...

NO! WAIT! DON'T *LEAVE* US, PSYCHO-MAN! WE WON'T KNOW WHAT TO *DO!*

I'M NOT SURE... IF I CAN *TRUST* THE OTHER TWO! ONLY *YOU* CAN TELL ME!

I'M AFRAID TO TURN MY *BACK*...DON'T KNOW WHAT'LL *HAPPEN!* I'M NOT SURE OF *ANYTHING!*

I--NEVER KNEW-- THAT *DOUBT* COULD BE SO *TERRIBLE!*

WE'LL *FOLLOW* YOU, PSYCHO-MAN... ANYWHERE! *ANYWHERE!*

THEN *RISE!* THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE!

WE MUST GET *COMPONENT FIVE* WHILE THERE IS STILL *TIME!*

IT SHOULD NOT BE *DIFFICULT!* IT WAS DELIVERED TO A *BLIND* GIRL!

AND, AT THAT MOMENT...

I'M SO *GLAD* YOU DROPPED IN, BEN!

THAT *PACKAGE* WAS DELIVERED TO ME... BUT I CAN'T *OPEN* IT!

MUST BE SOME KINDA *GAG*, KID!

IT DON'T LOOK TO *ME* LIKE THERE'S AN *OPENIN'* ANY-WHERE!

WELL, CONSIDERIN' THAT I'M A GUY WHAT CAN PEEL A *SHERMAN TANK* APART LIKE A *GRAPE*...

I DON'T FIGGER *THIS* NUTTY GIZMO'S GONNA GIMME MUCH TROUBLE!

DON'T *BREAK* IT, BEN DEAR! IT MIGHT BE *VALUABLE!*

INDEED IT *IS!!* FAR *MORE* VALUABLE THAN YOU COULD EVER *SUSPECT!*

WHO *SAID* THAT? WHAT *IS* THIS... A BLAMED *TALKIN' BOX?*

TURN AROUND, YOU ORANGE MONSTROSITY.. AND *FIND OUT!*

YOWF!

WHAT *HIT* ME?

Z-ZZZT!

OVER *THERE*... ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM---WH-- WHAT *IS* IT??

BEN! FOR THE *FIRST* TIME---I SEEM TO HEAR *FEAR* IN YOUR VOICE!!

I *KNOW* IT SOUNDS NUTTY--BUT--I *AM* SCARED!

HEY! IT'S COMIN' *CLOSER!*

BUT, SCARED OR *NOT*..*NOTHIN'S* GONNA HURT MY *ALICIA!!*

I DUNNO *WHO* YA ARE... OR *WHAT* YA ARE... BUT AS LONG AS THAT KID'S IN *DANGER*, I AIN'T *NEVER* GONNA BE SCARED ENOUGH TO LET HER *DOWN!!*

IT..IT TOOK MY *SUNDAY PUNCH..!*

'N' IT'S STILL ABLE TO HIT ME *BACK!!*

ZOK!

IT AIN'T *POSSIBLE! NOTHIN'S* THAT STRONG! *NOTHIN'!!*

EVEN THE *HULK* COULDN'T TOSS ME AROUND LIKE *THAT!*

ARGHHHH..!!

I AIN'T NEVER FELT THIS SCARED *BEFORE...* BUT, I GOTTA HOLD *ON...* I *GOTTA!!*

CAN'T GO *UNDER!* HAVETA *ROLL* WITH THE PUNCHES..!

CAN'T BLACK OUT!! GOTTA KEEP MY *HEAD* CLEAR! MEBBE.. IF I *YELL...*

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

HE..STOPPED SWINGIN'..AT ME..! DON'T *HEAR* 'IM ANY MORE!

BUT..WHY'D HE *GO..* WHEN HE WUZ *WINNIN'?* WHAT *HAPPENED?*

WHO *WUZ* HE? WHERE'D HE *COME* FROM? I..DON'T GET.. *ANY* OF THIS..!

ALICIA... ARE *YOU* OKAY? YOU.. *GOTTA* BE.. OKAY..!

HE IS *UNCONSCIOUS!* YOU MAY TAKE *COMPONENT FIVE* NOW!

HE WAS *MAGNIFICENT!* INSTEAD OF COLLAPSING IN FEAR--HE *FOUGHT BACK*---EVEN THOUGH IT WAS *HOPELESS* FROM THE START!

FOR, THE *IMAGINARY* CREATURE HE FOUGHT WAS HIS *OWN* GREAT POWER---THE *ONE* THING HE HAS ALWAYS *FEARED* WOULD DAMAGE OTHERS IF IT EVER GOT OUT OF *CONTROL!*

WHAT ABOUT THE *GIRL?*

LEAVE HER! WE ONLY DO WHAT PSYCHO-MAN *TELLS* US TO DO, REMEMBER?

FEAR

DOUBT

HATE

THIS IS WHAT WE CAME FOR!

THEN LET US *DEPART!*

COMPONENT FIVE WAS THE *FINAL ELEMENT* I NEED BEFORE COMPLETING MY *GREATEST* PROJECT!

NOW, WITH THE MATERIAL WITHIN THAT LEAD-LINED CASE, I CAN CREATE A *GIANT-SIZED* PSYCHO RAY---

A RAY CAPABLE OF AFFECTING THE *EMOTIONS* OF EVERY *MAN, WOMAN,* AND *CHILD* ON EARTH!

AND, WHOEVER CONTROLS THE *EMOTIONS* OF THE HELPLESS HUMAN RACE THEN BECOMES THE TOTAL *MASTER* OF ALL HUMANITY!

AND *WE* RULE RIGHT ALONG *WITH* YOU---RIGHT?

PERHAPS...IF IT SHOULD SO *PLEASE* ME! NOW--CARRY OUT YOUR ORDERS!

WE MUST TRANSPORT *COMPONENT FIVE* TO MY HIDDEN BASE IN THE *CARIBBEAN,* WHERE I CAN WORK ON IT *UNDISTURBED* WHILE THE THREE OF YOU MAINTAIN PERPETUAL *VIGIL!*

I HOPE WE GET A GOOD *HEAD START* BEFORE THE *THING* WAKES UP! IF HE EVER TEARS INTO US WHEN YOU'RE NOT THERE WITH YOUR *PSYCHO RAY*---

HAVE YOU *FORGOTTEN?* BY THE TIME WE CAN BE *FOUND,* THE WORLD WILL BE *MINE!*

WE BELIEVE YOU! JUST MAKE SURE YOU CONVINCE THE *THING!*

BUT NOW, INASMUCH AS THE ENTIRE *GLOBE* IS MARVEL'S MIXED-UP BATTLEGROUND, LET'S VISIT *PANTHER ISLAND*, SO NAMED FOR THE BILLIONAIRE WAKANDA CHIEFTAIN WHO HAS JUST *PURCHASED* IT...

ACCORDING TO OUR *RADAR*, IT IS *THERE* THAT THE *INTRUDERS* HAVE LANDED!

BACK TO YOUR POSTS, THEN! IT IS TIME FOR THE *BLACK PANTHER* TO PROWL... *ALONE!*

IF THOSE WHO HAVE LANDED COME IN *PEACE*, THEY SHALL BE *RECEIVED* IN PEACE!

BUT *WOE* TO ANY WHO DESIRE *HARM* TO THE PEOPLE OF THE *WAKANDAS!*

AT MY *HEELS*... LIVING STRANDS OF *HAIR*... ATTEMPTING TO *TRAP* ME!

BUT, THE *BLACK PANTHER* IS NOT SO EASILY ENSNARED!!

A *FEMALE*... WITH SCARLET TRESSES THAT OBEY HER EVERY WHIM!

KARNAK! HE IS *STRONGER* THAN WE THOUGHT! HE *ATTACKS* US!

STAND BACK, MEDUSA! I SHALL DROP HIM IN HIS *TRACKS!*

NOTHING CAN RESIST MY SHATTERING *HAND SLAM!*

NOTHING... SAVE ONE WITH THE SPEED OF THE BOUNDING *CHEETAH!*

KARNAK... WAIT! PERHAPS HE IS *NOT* HOSTILE..!

WHIIIIIIT

TOO LATE! IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, *NEITHER* OF THEM HEARS ME!

I CAME TO YOU IN *PEACE*, BUT YOU *ATTACKED* WITHOUT CAUSE!

SO, IF IT IS *COMBAT* YOU DESIRE..

THEN *COMBAT* YOU WILL *HAVE!*

BTO!

AK!

HE *RISES!* HIS *STRENGTH* SEEMS MORE THAN *HUMAN!*

BUT, NOTHING THAT *LIVES* CAN STOP THE CHARGE OF THE *BLACK PANTHER!*

BLACK BOLT!! WHEREVER YOU ARE--*HURRY!* WE *NEED* YOU!

A *FIGURE*... TALL AND SILENT BEFORE ME!

YOU MUST BE... *BLACK BOLT!*

BUT, YOU MAKE NO MOVE TO *ATTACK!*

I CANNOT BATTLE ONE WHO STANDS THUS *MOTIONLESS!*

STAND ASIDE, BLACK BOLT! THERE IS *UNFINISHED BUSINESS* BETWEEN US!

KARNAK--NO!! BLACK BOLT MAKES THE SIGN OF PEACE!

HE SENSES THAT THE STRANGER IS NOT AN ENEMY! THUS HE COMMANDS THAT THE FIGHTING CEASE!

THEN I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO OBEY THE WISHES OF OUR KING!

THE SILENT ONE IS THEIR LEADER! BUT, WHO ARE THEY? WHY ARE THEY HERE? I MUST FIND OUT!

MEDUSA! YOU UNDERSTAND BLACK BOLT'S ACTIONS BETTER THAN WE!

MY LOVED ONE SENSES SOME HIDDEN DANGER!

WHY DOES HE SUDDENLY SOAR INTO THE AIR?

HE RISES INTO THE AIR!

HE POSSESSES THE POWER OF FLIGHT ITSELF!

SILENTLY, SWIFTLY, LIKE A BIZARRE, BLACK-GARBED BIRD OF PREY, THE REGAL INHUMAN GLIDES ON, UNTIL--

HE'S SLOWING DOWN! HE'S FOUND SOMETHING!

A SHIMMERING BRIDGE--TAKING SHAPE FROM THAT REEF--TO HERE!

BLACK BOLT IS MASTER OF MOLECULAR ENERGY!

HE MERELY CAUSED THE WATER MOLECULES BEFORE US TO HARDEN!

THUS DOES HE SUMMON US! AND NOW--WE MUST JOIN HIM!

BUT-- HOW??!

THAT EXPRESSION--ON BLACK BOLT'S FACE!!

THE DANGER HE SENSES IS BOTH IMMEDIATE--AND DEADLY!

IF ONLY TRITON--AND GORGON--COULD BE HERE TOO!

GORGON HAS GONE UPON AN ERRAND! HE WILL RETURN SHORTLY!

BUT, TRITON HAS ACCOMPANIED CRYSTAL TO THE CITY OF NEW YORK--

TO VISIT THE HUMAN TORCH!

THE TORCH!! THEN--WE SHARE A FRIEND IN COMMON!

SO--I TELL YOU THIS--

IF DANGER THREATENS --WE SHARE IT TOGETHER--AND WE SHALL DEFEAT IT--TOGETHER!

THEY DO NOT SUSPECT THAT I, TOO, AM A KING!

YET, NEVER HAVE I SEEN A MONARCH WITH THE COMPLETE COMMAND--THE TOTAL SENSE OF POWER--WHICH HE WHOM THEY CALL BLACK BOLT POSSESSES!

WHATEVER THE DANGER MAY BE, IT LIES BENEATH OUR FEET!

WE ALL CAN SENSE IT NOW!

BE SILENT--ALL--AS I MENTALLY PROBE FOR WHAT WE SEEK!

THE NATURAL POWER OF MY BRAIN WILL GUIDE MY PEERLESS FINGERS TO THE WEAKEST POINT AMONGST THE ROCKS BELOW!

YOU DID IT! YOU SHATTERED THE REEF'S SURFACE LIKE AN EGGSHELL!

BUT, WHAT IS THIS DOME THAT WAS HIDDEN BELOW??

BEFORE MEDUSA'S STARTLED QUESTION CAN BE ANSWERED, A SUDDEN SHOCK WAVE LASHES OUT, WITH THE FURY OF A THUNDERCLAP--!!

KARNAK!!

BUT, BACK IN NEW YORK, THERE IS *ANOTHER* SURPRISE AWAITING US--OF A SLIGHTLY *DIFFERENT* SORT--

HEY, STRETCHO--WHAT'RE YA *WAITIN'* FOR??

WE GOTTA GO *AFTER* THEM THREE CREEPS WHO GRABBED THAT PACKAGE FROM ALICIA--AND I MEAN *NOW!*

EASY, BEN! WE CAN'T GO RUNNING OFF WITHOUT A *PLAN!*

AT ANY RATE, WE NEED MORE *FACTS!*

FACTS! *SHMACTS!!* DIDN'T YA HEAR ALICIA *TELLIN'* ABOUT IT??

THEY WORK FER SOME NUT WHO'S GOT A GIZMO THAT'S GONNA TAKE OVER THE WHOLE BLAMED *WORLD!*

'N *YOU* WANNA HANG AROUND TILL SOMEONE DROPS SOME MORE BLAMED *FACTS* IN YER LAP!

I'VE *ANOTHER* REASON FOR NOT WANTING TO LEAVE JUST NOW, BEN--!

YEAH? WHAT IZZIT?

REED! *MUST* YOU--?

THEY'LL *HAVE* TO KNOW SOONER OR LATER, DARLING--!

MY WIFE IS GOING TO HAVE--A BABY!

A BABY?!! ...

YA MEAN--THERE'S GONNA BE--THE PATTER OF TINY *FOOTSIES*--AROUND HERE?!!

THAT'S RIGHT, OLD FRIEND!

THEN--THAT MEANS--I'M PRACTICALLY --AN *UNCLE!!*

UNCLE *INDEED!* WE WERE HOPING YOU'D CONSENT TO BE --THE *GOD-FATHER!*

YA *MEAN* IT?? YA *REALLY* MEAN IT??

OF *COURSE* WE DO BEN DEAR!

BEN!! STOP!! PUT ME DOWN, YOU BIG GALOOT!!

SUE, DARLING-- I'M SO TERRIBLY HAPPY FOR YOU!

AND SO AM I.! IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL NEWS I'VE HEARD!

I'M SO EXCITED-- I COULD JUST CRY!

WHOOOOOOPIE!! WE'RE GONNA HAVE AN HONEST-TO-GOSH BABY!!

YAHOOO!! LOOK AT ME!! I'M GONNA HAVE A NEPHEW!

OR, WOULDJA BELIEVE--A NIECE?

NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND, BEN?

THAT'S WHY I DON'T WANT TO GO OFF WITHOUT SUE--

AND I CAN'T TAKE HER, WITH US!

I WISH YOU HAD TOLD US SOONER, STRETCHO!

SURE! WE'D HAVE TOSSED A PARTY!

HEY! WAIT A MINNIT! WAIT A MINNIT!

MEBBE YOU CAN'T TAKE OFF AFTER THEM SKUNKS-- BUT WE CAN!

I AINT GONNA LET NO KID OF OURS GIT BORN INTO THE SAME WORLD WITH CREEPS LIKE THEM RUNNIN' AROUND LOOSE!

AND, SPEAKING OF "CREEPS LIKE THEM"--

PSYCHO-MAN! I'VE PUT THE COMPONENT FOUR NEAR THE MIND RAY--WHERE YOU WANTED IT!

GOOD! I MAY HAVE USE FOR IT SOONER THAN WE THOUGHT!

OUR BASE HAS BEEN DISCOVERED --BY STRANGE INTRUDERS!

INTRUDERS?? WHO ARE THEY?

WHAT DOES IT MATTER? THEY ARE NO MATCH FOR ME!

I HAVE ALREADY STUNNED THEM WITH A SIMPLE SHOCK WAVE!

AND NOW, WHILE THEY ARE DAZED AND UNCERTAIN, YOU MAY GO AND BRING THEM TO ME!

IT'S GONNA BE A PLEASURE TO LATCH ONTO SOME ACTION AT LAST!

I DO NOT KNOW HOW ANYONE COULD HAVE FOUND THIS REMOTE HIDDEN ISLE--!

BUT, NOW THAT THEY ARE HERE --THEY WILL NEVER LEAVE ---ALIVE!

BE CAREFUL! THEY MAY POSSESS POWERS WHICH WE DO NOT EVEN SUSPECT!

BAH! NO POWERS CAN BE THE MATCH OF OUR OWN!

BUT, AT THAT VERY SPLIT-SECOND, THE DRAMATIC BLACK BOLT BLASTS HIS WAY INTO THE FORTIFIED CORRIDOR WITH HIS INDESCRIBABLE ELECTRON FORCE--!

THEY MUST BE CARRYIN' EXPLOSIVES WITH 'EM!

THAT MUST BE THEIR LEADER! USE YOUR SOLAR PISTOL-- QUICKLY!

LOOK! THERE'S A LONG-HAIRED CHICK WITH 'IM!

BLACK BOLT! LOOK OUT!! HE HAS A GUN!

GOT 'IM! BY THE TIME HE CAN SEE AGAIN, IT'LL BE ALL OVER!

IF YOU HAVE HARMED **BLACK BOLT**, I'LL--!!

FORGET IT, LADY! THERE'S NOTHIN' YOU CAN **DO**-- NOT WITH AN **ELECTRO-LARIAT** WRAPPED AROUND YUH!

WHA--? **SO!** THERE'S **MORE** OF YUH, HUH?

WELL, THE MORE THE MERRIER!

I'VE ENOUGH **ELECTRO SHOT** AMMO TO TAKE CARE OF A **DOZEN** OF YUH!

BEHIND HIM! ANOTHER ONE-- WITH A **GUN!** THE **BLACK PANTHER** SHALL STOP HIM!

THOUGH YOU LEAP LIKE A **JUNGLE BEAST**--YOUR ATTACK IS **USELESS!**

NO MATTER THAT MY SHOT WENT WILD-- YOU ARE **DOOMED!**

MY GUN CAN **ALSO** FIRE MINIATURIZED **HUNTER MISSILES**--

MISSILES WHICH CAN **NEVER** MISS!

FOR, NO MATTER **WHERE** YOU RUN--THEY WILL EVENTUALLY **HOME IN** ON YOU--AND THEN-- **GOODBYE!**

HE IS **RIGHT!** I CANNOT CONTINUE TO **DODGE** SO POTENT A WEAPON MUCH LONGER!

AND, WHEN IN DOUBT WHAT TO *DO*--

THERE CAN BE ONLY *ONE* ANSWER--!

RESORT TO THE *UNEXPECTED!*

SUCH AS LEAPING *BEHIND* YOUR FOE-- AND LETTING *HIM* TAKE THE BRUNT OF HIS OWN FLYING WEAPON!

-:*UNNNHH!!*:-

YOUR *LARIAT*--IT IS *ELECTRICALLY CHARGED!!*

YOU *KNOW* IT, LITTLE FELLA! *THAT'S* WHY THEY CALL ME *LIVE WIRE!*

AND *NOW*, I'M GONNA *STEP UP* THE VOLTAGE --JUST FOR *YOU!*

NO AMOUNT OF ELECTRICAL CURRENT CAN *HURT* A MAN--

--IF HE CAN KEEP IT FROM *TOUCHING* HIM--

BY RUNNING RIGHT *THRU* IT!

AND, ONCE I CAN GET WITHIN *STRIKING RANGE* OF YOU--

NOTHING CAN SAVE YOU FROM THE COUNTER-ATTACK OF *KARNAK!!*

THEN, EVEN AS THE INCREDIBLE INHUMAN ATTACKS WITH THE ACCURACY AND PRECISION OF A LIVING MACHINE, *BLACK BOLT* RECOVERS HIS VISION, FROM THE SOLAR GUN BLAST--!

SO! HIS NAME IS *KARNAK,* IS IT??

WELL, HE'LL BE *NAMELESS* FOREVER AFTER HE TAKES THE *DIRECT HIT* I'M GOING TO BEAM AT HIM!

BUT, BEFORE THE FATAL SHOT CAN BE FIRED, *BLACK BOLT* UNLEASHES A SINGLE, BLUDGEONING BLOW--!

BTOK!

WHILE AN UNBLINKING PAIR OF COLD, EMOTIONLESS *EYES* BEHOLD EVERY MOVE WITH SMOLDERING HATRED--!

THE INTRUDERS ARE FAR MORE *POWERFUL* THAN I SURMISED!

BUT THE *VICTORY* SHALL STILL BE *MINE!*

WITH *COMPONENT FOUR* NOW IN MY POSSESSION, *NOTHING* CAN STAND AGAINST ME!

ALL I NEED DO IS PLACE THIS *FINAL UNIT* IN THE PROPER POSITION--!

AND NOW-- MY GIANT-SIZE *MIND RAY* IS FINALLY OPERATIONAL!

SOON, THE *EMOTIONS* OF EVERYONE ON *EARTH* WILL BE *MINE* TO COMMAND!

BUT, BEFORE LAUNCHING MY *TOTAL* ATTACK, I'LL TOY WITH THOSE WHO DARE TRY TO *STOP* ME--!

EVEN *NOW*, I SEE THEIR SILENT *LEADER*--SWIFTLY GLIDING TOWARDS THIS CHAMBER-- AS THOUGH *HE* AND HIS PUNY COMPANIONS HAVE THE POWER TO STAND AGAINST THE ALL-CONSUMING *MIND RAY* OF *PSYCHO-MAN!*

BLACK BOLT HAS *HALTED!*

HE SENSES THAT THE GRAVEST *DANGER* LIES BEYOND THAT PANEL BEFORE HIM--!

BUT NOW-- *BEHIND US!* SOMEONE *APPROACHES!*

MEDUSA!! AND--THE *INHUMANS!*

IT IS *LOCKJAW!* HE HAS BROUGHT *TRITON*--THE *TORCH*--AND THE *THING* HERE!

PERHAPS HE SENSED WE *NEEDED* THEM!

I SUSPECT WE ALL SEEK THE SAME *OBJECTIVE*--!

THE ONE WHO THREATENS THIS PLANET WITH HIS SO-CALLED *MIND RAY!*

HE MAY BE *WATCHING* US RIGHT *NOW!*

WHAT'RE YOU HOT SHOTS *WAITIN'* FOR? WHY AINTCHA *TACKLIN'* 'IM??

THAT IS JUST WHAT WE WERE ABOUT TO *DO*, BEN GRIMM--WITH *BLACK BOLT* TO LEAD US!

NOW THAT *YOU* ARE HERE, WILL YOU *JOIN* US IN THE IMPENDING BATTLE?

WELL, *ONE* THING'S FOR SURE, LADY--

WE DIDN'T COME ALL THIS WAY JUST TA SIT ON THE BLASTED *SIDELINES!*

WADDAYA *SAY*, TORCHY? LET'S MAKE LIKE *HEROES!*

SPECIAL NOTE: WE SUGGEST YOU STUDY THIS ILLUSTRATION CAREFULLY, AND PERHAPS EVEN FILE IT AWAY IN SOME SAFE REPOSITORY--FOR IT IS UNLIKELY YOU WILL SOON SEE *ANOTHER* SUCH AWESOME AGGREGATION OF RAW *POWER* AS NOW CONFRONTS YOUR EVER-LOVIN' EYES--!

OKAY! LET'S GET IT *OVER* WITH! I WANNA GET BACK TO *CRYSTAL!*

NOT TILL I GIT SOME *CLOBBERIN'* IN', JUNIOR!

I AM NOT CERTAIN OF THE DANGER--BUT, IN COMPANY SUCH AS *THIS*--I SHALL FACE IT WITH *PRIDE!*

WHERE *MENACE* AWAITS THE INHUMANS--THERE SHALL *TRITON* BE!

OUR FOE IS *AWARE* OF US--BUT WE DO NOT KNOW *WHAT* WE FACE!

NO MATTER! *BLACK BOLT* LEADS US!! WE *CANNOT* FAIL!

THEN, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER--

BLACK BOLT!! CAN--THAT--BE OUR--ENEMY??

IT SEEMED TO-- MATERIALIZE --OUT OF NOWHERE!

-YEEESH!- THAT'S A REAL YANCY STREET REJECT, IF I EVER SEEN ONE!

WELL, WE ALL GOTTA GO SOMETIME-- BUT ONE THING'S FOR SURE--

WE AINT GONNA DIE OF BOREDOM!

MOVING WITH THE SPEED AND FURY OF A THUNDERCLAP, THE SILENT BLACK BOLT UNLEASHES THE FIRST BLOW--DISABLING ONE OF THE MONSTROUS CREATURE'S MIGHTY TENTACLES--!

WOWEE! NICE GOIN' THERE, BOLTY!

THAT OUGHTTA MAKE 'IM HOLLAR UNCLE!

BOK!

BUT, NO SOONER ARE THE WORDS OUT OF BEN GRIMM'S MOUTH, WHEN--

HEY! WHAT GIVES?!!

IN PLACE OF THAT CLOBBERED TENTACLE IT JUST SPOUTED A COUPLE'A NEW ONES!

AND THEN, SLOWLY--SHOCKINGLY--THE HAUNTING FEAR BEGINS TO SET IN--FILLING THE HEART OF EACH DESPERATE COMBATANT--!!

I DON'T LIKE IT!

HOW CAN WE FIGHT SOMETHIN' THAT GETS TWICE AS DANGER-OUS EVERY TIME WE WHUMP IT?!!

TRITON! STAY BACK! LET BLACK BOLT 'N ME TAKE THE PUNISHMENT! YOU AINT GOT THE STRENGTH--!

NO! MY POWER MAY NOT EQUAL YOURS-- BUT EACH MUST DO HIS SHARE!

EVEN IF I AM CRUSHED IT MAY GAIN YOU PRICELESS TIME!

THEN, AS IF IN ANSWER TO HIS VALIANT CRY, THE AQUATIC INHUMAN IS *FELLED*, AS THE UNCANNY BATTLE CONTINUES--

NO MATTER *WHAT* I DO, I CAN'T SLOW 'IM DOWN!

EVEN *BLACK BOLT* CAN'T FIGGER OUT HOW TO *TACKLE* 'IM!

MEAN-WHILE--

KARNAK!! THAT CONSTANT *HUM* BEHIND THE WALL--!

I HEAR IT, TOO!

IT MUST BE A *MACHINE* OF SOME SORT--PERHAPS THE *SOURCE* OF OUR ENEMY'S *POWER!*

STAND BACK, MEDUSA!!

LET THE HAND THAT CAN CRACK A *MOUNTAIN* LEAD US TO THE *MYSTERY* WITHIN!!

THWIPP!

NO!! IT DIDN'T *SHATTER!* IT'S LIKE STRIKING *MOLASSES!*

THE *WALL* HAS BECOME LIKE A THING *ALIVE!* IT WON'T RELEASE YOUR *HAND!*

MEDUSA!! IT IS THE ONE THING I'VE EVER *FEARED--!*

MY *HAND*--IT IS THE SOURCE OF ALL MY *POWER*-- WITHOUT IT, I AM *HELPLESS!*

IT MUST BE *FREED!!* I *CANNOT* LOSE MY *HAND!*

EVEN MY SINEWY STRANDS OF *HAIR* CANNOT PRY YOU LOOSE!!

THE *OTHERS* FIGHT A CREATURE WHICH CANNOT BE *DESTROYED--*

WHILE *WE* ARE POWERLESS AGAINST A LIVING *WALL!*

HAS *FATE* CONSPIRED TO ASSEMBLE *FOES* AGAINST WHOM WE HAVE *NO CHANCE?!!*

AND, BEHIND THE SEEMINGLY LIVING WALL, MERCILESS EYES AND EARS RECORD EVERY WORD--AND EVERY MOVEMENT--

NONE CAN STAND UP AGAINST THE SUPREME WEAPON OF PSYCHO-MAN...THE MATCHLESS WEAPON OF--FEAR!

THOUGH THEY BATTLE IMAGES, WHICH I HEREWITH CREATE--THOSE SELFSAME IMAGES POSSESS THE POWER TO TOTALLY DESTROY EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM!

BUT, WHAT IS THIS? MY ALARM LIGHT FLASHES! AN INTRUDER IS NEAR!

SO! MY PANTHER TRACKING POWER HAS BROUGHT ME THRU THE AIR DUCT--TO WHERE THE REAL ENEMY SITS CONCEALED!

I MUST NOT LET HIM SEE THAT I AM AWARE OF HIM--UNTIL HE GETS CLOSER--CLOSER--!!

NOW! ALL I NEED DO IS CONNECT THE AIR DUCT'S CIRCUITS INTO THE FREQUENCIES EMITTED BY MY FEAR RAY--

THERE! THE CONNECTION IS COMPLETED!

NOW, HE SHALL BE ATTACKED BY WHATEVER HE FEARS THE MOST--BY THE ONE MENACE HE WILL BE POWERLESS TO DEFEAT!!

AND, IN THIS CASE, IT IS A SAVAGE, DEADLY, HUMANOID BEAST--WITH CAT-LIKE POWERS FAR SUPERIOR TO HIS OWN!

SO!! FROM OUT OF NOWHERE--THE BLACK PANTHER'S NEWEST CHALLENGE!!

HIS STRENGTH IS *DOUBLE* THAT OF MINE!!

NEVER HAVE I FACED SUCH BRUTAL *RAGE*-- SUCH FEARFUL *FORCE*--

BUT, IF THIS IS TRULY MY *SUPREME TEST*--

THEN I *MUST* NOT FAIL!!

IT IS *UNBELIEVABLE!*

THOUGH I MOVE FASTER THAN A RACING *CHEETAH*--

HIS SPEED IS GREATER *STILL!*

MY HAND IS *CAUGHT*-- AS THOUGH IN A VISE OF *STEEL!!*

UNHHH!!

THIS--MUST *NOT*-- BE--THE *END!!* I MUST--FIGHT ON-- *SOMEHOW*--!!

I MUST! --I *MUST*-- I-- UHHH--!!

BUT, EVEN AS THE *BLACK PANTHER* REFUSES TO ACCEPT DEFEAT, *ANOTHER* FIGURE ENTERS THE SCENE! THE FIGURE OF--MIGHTY *GORGON*!!

MY *SCOUTING* MISSION IS ENDED!

I MUST INFORM *BLACK BOLT* THAT THERE ARE *NATIVES* ON THIS ISLE--

IT IS *NOT DESERTED*, AS WE HAD THOUGHT!

BUT, WHAT IS *THIS*? OUR *SHELTER*--IT HAS BEEN *ABANDONED*!!

YET, THERE MUST ALWAYS BE *ONE* WHO REMAINS ON GUARD--

EXCEPT IN A CASE OF-- EXTREME *EMERGENCY*!!

THAT *ELECTRON BRIDGE*-- LEADING TO THE ROCKY REEF--

IT COULD HAVE BEEN CREATED *ONLY* BY BLACK BOLT!

I SEE *SMOKE* --COMING FROM THE ROCKS AHEAD!

MY EVERY *INSTINCT* WARNS OF *DANGER*!

AND, WHERE THERE IS *DANGER*-- THERE SHALL *GORGON* BE!

AN *OPENING*-- BLASTED RIGHT THRU THE SOLID *ROCK*!

IT LEADS INTO A *CORRIDOR*--FILLED WITH STRANGE, *SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT*!

WHAT IS *THIS*?!!

THE *HUMAN TORCH*-- TOGETHER WITH *MEDUSA* --BATTLING A GIGANTIC CREATURE WHO SEEMS *IMPERVIOUS* TO THE YOUTH'S *FLAME*!

STAY *BEHIND* ME, MEDUSA!!

PERHAPS I CAN SHIELD US WITH A FIERY *THERMAL WALL*!

IT ISN'T ANY *USE*!!

YOU'RE FACING THE MENACE YOU'VE ALWAYS *FEARED*--A FOE WHO CANNOT BE STOPPED BY *FIRE*!

I'VE SEEN *ENOUGH!*

LET THE POWER OF *GORGON* NOW ENTER THE FRAY!

WITH ONE *SMASH* OF MY HEAVY-SHOD *FEET* I'LL CREATE A SERIES OF STAGGERING *SHOCK WAVES--!*

SHOCK WAVES *STRONG* ENOUGH TO DRIVE BACK *ANY* CREATURE WHO-- *WAIT!* WHAT IS *THIS?!!*

HE BEGINS TO *DISINTEGRATE--* TO *FADE AWAY--* BEFORE MY *EYES!*

IT IS NOT *POSSIBLE!* HE *VANISHED--* LIKE SOME MONSTROUS *MIRAGE!!*

BUT--HE WAS *REAL!!* WE *SAW* HIM!! WE *HEARD* HIM! WE *FELT* THE CRUSHING POWER OF HIS *ATTACK!*

AND *YET--!!*

IF ONLY *REED* WERE HERE!! IF *ANYONE* COÜLD FIGURE THIS OUT-- IT'D BE *HIM!*

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS HAPPENED-- BUT, THE *OTHERS* ARE NOT HERE! ARE THEY *TOO* IN DANGER??

BLACK BOLT!! KARNAK! TRITON!! WHERE *ARE* THEY? WE MUST *FIND* THEM!

GORGON!! THIS WAY!! I AM *HERE!* YOUR SUDDEN *SHOCK WAVES* HAVE FREED MY HAND!

KARNAK! WHAT EARTHLY POWER COULD HAVE HELD *YOU* IN SUCH A MANNER?

I DO NOT *KNOW--* BUT IT MUST BE *DESTROYED!*

LOOK! AHEAD OF US! IT IS *TRITON*--HELPLESS WITHIN A *PRESSURE CUBE!*

IT IS THE *ONE* THING HE HAS ALWAYS *FEARED--* BEING TRAPPED WITHOUT *DAMPNESS--* WITHOUT *HUMIDITY!*

SUDDENLY, THE PATTERN GROWS *CLEARER!* WE HAVE *ALL* BEEN FIGHTING THE THINGS WE *FEAR!*

HE MUST BE *FREED--* WHILE THERE IS *TIME--!*

AND FREED HE SHALL BE!

THE PRESSURE CUBE HAS VANISHED!!

THOOM!

IN SOME UNFATHOMABLE MANNER, YOUR SUDDEN SHOCK WAVES SEEM TO BE THE ONLY WEAPON WHICH CAN DESTROY THE NIGHT-MARES WHICH FACE US!

NIGHT-MARES!! THAT'S THE PERFECT NAME FOR THEM!

AND I'M GONNA FIND OUT WHO'S CAUSING THEM--LIKE RIGHT NOW!

FIRST, YOU MUST LOCATE BLACK BOLT! NO HARM MUST COME TO HIM!

YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT--!

BASHFUL BENJAMIN AND THE BLACK PANTHER ARE MISSING, ALSO!

THE HECK WE ARE, JUNIOR!

WE'RE RIGHT HERE--JUST AS LOVABLE AS EVER!

BUT THAT NUTTY MONSTER JUST UPPED AND WENT BLOOIE A MINUTE AGO!

THAT WAS WHEN GORGON CAUSED THOSE SHOCK WAVES OF HIS!

LOOK AT BLACK BOLT!! HE SENSES SOMETHING--!

WHATEVER HAS BEEN THREATENING US--IT MUST BE BEHIND THAT WALL!

BLACK BOLT WILL FIGURE OUT SOME WAY TO LEARN WHAT'S BACK THERE!

YEAH? WELL, I AINT GOT TIME TO WAIT--!!

STEP BACK, SONNY BOY!

I BEEN ITCHIN' FOR A CHANCE LIKE THIS--!

SKRUNCH!

OKAY, YOU GUYS-- LET'S GO! WE DON'T WANNA BE LATE FER THE PARTY!

FOOLS! I HAVE BEEN WATCHING YOUR EVERY MOVE! YOU HAVE ONLY HASTENED THE MOMENT OF YOUR DESTRUCTION!

WITHIN THE PAST FEW SECONDS, I'VE INCREASED THE FEAR INTENSITY LEVEL OF MY SUPREME WEAPON!

THUS, IT IS NOW POTENT ENOUGH TO ELIMINATE ALL OF YOU WITH BUT A SINGLE BLAST!

WELL, WADDAYA KNOW! THERE'S SOMEBODY BACK THERE--WITH A POP-GUN POINTIN' AT US!

QUICK!! GIT BEHIND ME! I'LL TAKE THE BLAST--FER ALL OF US!

HEY--BLACK BOLT!! WHATCHA DOIN'??

ZZZIS!!

HOLY COW!

THAT GIMMICKY RAY OF YOURS CLOBBERED THE GUN BEFORE HE COULD SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER!

KAK!

LOOK! FER THE FIRST TIME-- WE CAN SEE WHO'S BACK THERE!

I AM PSYCHO-MAN SOON THE MASTER OF EARTH!

WE SHOULD'A GUESSED-- ANOTHER NUT!

SPEAK YOUR PIECE, IF YOU WISH--IT DOES NOT MATTER-- YOU ARE ALL DOOMED!

FEAR

DOUBT

HATE

THOUGH YOU HAVE DESTROYED MY SUPREME WEAPON, I CAN ALWAYS CONSTRUCT ANOTHER-- SINCE TIME HAS NO MEANING TO ME!

MEANWHILE, MY MIND RAY--AGAINST WHICH THERE IS NO DEFENSE--STILL REMAINS INTACT!

NO DEFENSE, HUH? BLACK BOLT BUSTED YER OTHER LITTLE TOY--'N HE'LL DO THE SAME TO THAT GOOFY GIZMO!

YOU ARE WRONG! I AM AWARE THAT HE MUST BUILD UP HIS MOLECULAR ENERGY POWER AFTER EVERY APPLICATION--

AND, BY THE TIME HE IS READY TO STRIKE AGAIN-- IT WILL ALL BE OVER!

BUT, YOU MUST NOT BEMOAN YOUR FINAL ***DEFEAT***--FOR, THE ***SELFSAME FATE*** AWAITS ALL THOSE WHO REMAIN UPON THE EARTH!!

YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY GUESSED THAT I AM ***NOT*** AN EARTHMAN--ALTHOUGH, IN TRUTH, I ***AM!***

FOR, I COME FROM THE CLUSTER WORLDS OF ***SUB-ATOMICA***--WORLDS IN WHICH ***MICRO-GALAXIES*** EXIST--SO SMALL THAT YOUR MOST POWERFUL ***MICROSCOPES*** CANNOT BEGIN TO DETECT THEM!!

"FROM OUR SAFE VANTAGE POINT WITHIN A SINGLE EARTHLY ***ATOM***, WE STUDIED THE GIGANTIC PLANET UPON WHICH YOU LIVE--THE PLANET WHICH SHALL SOON BE ***OURS!!***"

AT THE RATE OUR RACE IS ***MULTIPLYING***, WE MUST FIND ***ANOTHER*** WORLD--A ***LARGER*** WORLD TO HOUSE OUR POPULACE!

AND THERE IT ***IS!!*** ENORMOUS BEYOND BELIEF--AND TOTALLY ***DEFENSELESS*** AGAINST OUR WEAPONS OF THE ***MIND!***

"YES, ***THOSE*** ARE OUR MIGHTIEST WEAPONS--INSTRUMENTS WHICH CONTROL THE ***MIND***--WHICH PLAY UPON OUR VICTIMS' ***EMOTIONS***--EMOTIONS SUCH AS ***HATE***--***DOUBT***--AND ***FEAR!***--AS ***CHIEF SCIENTIST***, I KNEW WHAT MUST BE DONE--"

IT WILL BE THE GREATEST ***INVASION*** OF ALL TIME!

I--ONE MAN ALONE--THE ***SMALLEST*** LIVING BEING ANY HUMAN CAN CONCEIVE OF--

THRU USE OF MY ***MIND RAY***--I SHALL ***CONQUER*** ALL OF EARTH!!

I AM SO ***SMALL*** THAT YOU COULD NEVER ***SEE*** ME--COULD NEVER ***HARM*** ME--

AND YET, HERE WITHIN THIS ***ARTIFICIAL BODY***--WHICH I OPERATE BY ***MENTAL CONTROL***--I AM IN POSSESSION OF THE ONE WEAPON WHICH CAN ***DESTROY*** YOU ALL!

FEAR

DOUBT

HATE

BUT, EVEN AS THE MURDEROUS *PSYCHO-MAN* SPEAKS, THE *BLACK PANTHER* STANDS ALONE--HIS BESTIAL OPPONENT HAVING *VANISHED* WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SUPREME WEAPON--!

MY FOE HAS *VANISHED!!*

AND *I* STILL LIVE!

PERHAPS THERE *STILL* IS TIME FOR THE PANTHER TO *STRIKE!*

VOICES!! COMING FROM THE OTHER END OF THE DUCT!!

AND *NOW*--AS YOU VAINLY STRUGGLE AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF A CLOSE-RANGE *FEAR BLAST*--THE *END* IS NEAR AT LAST!

YOU MOUTH THE *TRUTH,* EVIL ONE--!

BUT, THE *END* YOU SPEAK OF--SHALL BE *YOURS!*

MAN! IF I SAW THIS IN A *TV WESTERN,* I WOULDN'TA *BELIEVED* IT!

I--DO NOT --*UNDER-STAND!!*

THIS *COSTUME*--IT IS *EMPTY!!* THERE IS--*NO ONE* INSIDE!!

THEM LAST-MINUTE *CAVALRY CHARGES* WENT OUT WITH *HOPALONG CASSIDY!*

AND YET--MY *EYES* SAW IT *MOVE!!* MY *EARS* HEARD IT *SPEAK!*

WHOEVER--OR *WHAT-EVER*--WAS ONCE INSIDE --WILL NEVER THREATEN US *AGAIN!*

WITH THE *MIND RAY* SHATTERED--HIS MECHANICAL SUIT *SMASHED*--HE IS *FINISHED!!*

YEAH! HE CAN'T BOTHER US ANY MORE THAN *ANY* PINT-SIZED *GERM* FLOATIN' AROUND THE JOINT!

I WONDER! HAS HE *RETURNED* TO THE SUB-ATOMIC WORLD FROM WHENCE HE CAME--?

OR IS HE FOREVER *TRAPPED* WITHIN THAT NOW-USELESS SUIT--

THE TINIEST *PRISONER* OF THE WORLD HE HOPED TO *CONQUER!*

I'M GUESSING THAT'S *ONE* ANSWER WE'RE NEVER GONNA *KNOW*--

AND, MAYBE IT'S JUST AS *WELL!*

THERE'S A HECKUVA LOT *WRONG* WITH THIS NUTTY OL' PLANET--BUT IT'S *OURS,* JUST THE SAME!

'N IF ANYONE *ELSE* TRIES TO *MUSCLE IN*--NO MATTER *WHO*--NO MATTER *HOW*--

WE'LL *CLOBBER* 'IM--

--OR WE'LL GO DOWN *TRYIN'!!!*

'NUFF SAID!

IS IT A TAFFY PULL? IS IT A MASSACRE? IS IT SOCIAL NIGHT IN A BEAR PIT? NO, YOU QUAINT AND QUERULOUS QUIXOTIC MARVEL MADMEN, THIS TRANSCENDS THE COMPLEXITY OF THE TV HILL BILLIES THEMSELVES!

THIS IS A PLOT?

ON THE OUTSIDE, OUR NEW CHARACTER MUST BE SMOOTH, DASHING, CONTINENTAL--A TERROR IN TUXEDOS WHO CLEANS HIS FINGERNAILS BEFORE DEFUSING AN H-BOMB!

WELL, TO BE REALLY FRANK, PUSSYCAT, IT'S AN ITTY-BITTY, RIBBY-TICKLE, JIM-CRACKY LITTLE LAUGH-GETTER OF A PUT-ON ON HOW PLOTS ARE HATCHED IN THE MARVEL ROOKERY! DON'T BE CHICKEN! SO WHAT IF IT IS A TURKEY! READ IT! IT'S ONLY THREE PSYCHEDELIC PAGES!

OH, NO--STAN AND JACK ARE AT IT AGAIN!

YEAH--BUT ON THE INSIDE, HE'LL BE A FUTURISTIC, MEDIEVAL PRIMITIVE WITH A CLEVER ANSWER FOR THE FORCES WHO WOULD OPPRESS THE WEAK--BUTCHERY!!

ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE--MUST BE OUT OF YOUR MIND!!

SLOP 'ART'

RETURN TO NASA

CAVIAR
PHEASANT
BON BONS
SALAMI

IRVING FORBUSH--THIS IS MOTHER--

SHAKESPEARE MADE SIMPLE

WHY DID I EVER QUIT MY NICE, QUIET JOB AT THE BOILER FACTORY?

PROPERTY OF BUDGET-SLASHING DEPT.

SHORT CIGARS FOR TALL EDITORS

'NUFF SAID!

LAUNDRY

A HERO SHOULD LOOK LIKE A HERO--LIKE ME--RASCALLY ROY THOMAS--MUSCLE OF THE MIDWEST!

IT HAD TO HAPPEN! JOLLY JACK NOT ONLY DREW THIS WHOLE FRENETIC FARCE, BUT HE ACTUALLY WROTE IT ALL BY HIS LONE-SOME! HIS PURPOSE, OF COURSE, IS TO SHOW THAT COMIC MAG CREATORS ARE JUST AS NORMAL, SANE, AND CONSERVATIVE AS ANY OTHER NUT!

INKED BY: FRANK GIACOIA

LETTERED BY: L.P. GREGORY

WEPT OVER BY: SORROWFUL STAN

ALLOW ME TO ILLUSTRATE ON YOUR CONVENIENT BOARD! NOW, LET'S GIVE THE HERO A **BUSHY BEARD** UNDER WHICH HE CAN HIDE HIS **COSTUME!**

BUT THEN IT WILL LOOK LIKE HE'S WEARING A **HAIRY** COSTUME--!

YEAH, WELL, MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST GIVE THE HERO A **RADIOACTIVE LIVER** WHICH LIGHTS UP IN THE PRESENCE OF DANGER!

I KNOW! WE'LL MAKE HIS **MOLECULES JINGLE** WHEN A VILLAIN APPROACHES!

STOLEN FROM KID COLT

BUT, **SMILIN' STAN LEE**-- WON'T THAT RIDICULOUS NOISE **BETRAY** THE HERO?

NO, **JACK "KING" KIRBY**-- THAT HYMN TO LAW AND ORDER WILL **RATTLE** THE **VILLAIN!**

BUY MOTHER FURY'S HAND GRENADES

MEDDLER! THE **RED SKULL** SHALL HEAR OF THIS!

SHWEIN! YOU WOULD DEFY YOUR **FUEHRER?**

TAKE **THAT!**

ACHTUNG! MINEN!

MEMO

BANG!

BANG!

*ANOTHER SCINTILLATINGLY SUBTLE SOUND-EFFECT BY SOPHISTICATED STAN.

FORBUSH AWARD FOR TOM-FOOLERY

WHY DON'T WE SETTLE FOR A BEATLE-BANGED BALLET-DANCER WHO BLINDS HIS FOES WITH **PHOSPHORESCENT DANDRUFF?**

I'LL BUY THAT! (A COMMUTER TRAIN TICKET IS SELLING **CUT-RATE** TODAY--AND I MUST HUSTLE TO **BUY THAT!**)

BUT AT THAT MOMENT, UNAWARE THAT DOCTOR DOOM'S NEW RAY HAS OVER-STIMULATED THEIR ENTHUSIASM--A CONTINGENT OF 2ND GENERATION **MMMS'ERS** ARRIVE...

IS THE **THING** FOR **REAL?**

WHERE'S **SPIDEY?**

THE HECK WITH **THEM!** I WANNA MEET **AUNT PETUNIA!**

BOY--WE'RE LUCKY WE CAN CHANGE COSTUMES AS FAST AS OUR **CHARACTERS!**

YEAH! I KNOW THEY **LOVE** US-- BUT IT PAYS TO KEEP THESE **ANTI-BUFFETING SUITS** HANDY!

THIS WAY, KEEPERS OF THE FAITH! OUR LINE-UP OF NOBLE CHARACTERS AWAIT YOU!

I SEE THOR!

ISN'T THAT IRON MAN?

WOW--I SEE SOLLY BRODSKY!

GO GET 'EM, GANG --OUR HEROES WILL GET FLABBY IF THEY DON'T GET A WORKOUT!

KLATTER! STOMP!

HALL OF HERCULEAN HEROES

HAR-HAR-THOSE FRANTIC ONES WILL HAVE THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES! OUR HEROES ARE ON HOLIDAY--!

YEAH! THE ROOM'S FULL OF VILLAINS, RECUPERATING FROM THEIR MISDEEDS!

BAM!

SMASH!

KBOP!

IT MUST'VE BEEN GREAT FUN--WAIT! HERE COME--THE MELTER AND THE JUGGERNAUT!

LOOKS LIKE THOSE TIGERS GAVE THEM A HARD TIME! THEY'RE NOT HAPPY, STAN--AND, I THINK WE'VE RUN OUT OF PROTECTIVE COSTUMES--!

SEVERAL BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS LATER ...

I'M HAVING YOUR ART MATERIALS SENT OVER, JOLLY JACK-- THE GOLDEN AGE OF MARVEL MUST CONTINUE IN FULL FLOWER!

IT ONLY HURTS WHEN WE LAUGH!

'NUFF SAID, SMILIN' STAN!

LITTLE MARVEL WHITE HOUSE

LITTLE ABSENTEE BULL PEN

STAN LEE THIRD DEGREE BURNS

JACK KIRBY SUNDRY BONE BREAKS

I'LL HAVE MY TURN AT THEM YET!

C'EST FIN!

THE INCOMPARABLE INHUMANS!

THE ULTIMATE INHUMAN...

BLACK BOLT

MOST SUPREMELY *POWERFUL* OF ALL THE INHUMANS, THE MAJESTIC *BLACK BOLT*--ABLE TO SOAR LIKE AN AVENGING *EAGLE*--DARES NOT TRUST HIMSELF TO *SPEAK* --FOR HIS VOICE, UNLEASHED, CAN SHATTER A *MOUNTAIN* --AS IT DID MONTHS AGO, SETTING HIS PEOPLE FREE!

THE INCOMPARABLE INHUMANS!

THE GENTLEMAN'S NAME IS...

GORGON

NO EARTHLY INSTRUMENT CAN BEGIN TO CALCULATE THE PULSATING *POWER* THAT LIES WITHIN THE *POUNDING FEET* OF *GORGON*--MOST SAVAGE, MOST UNCONTROLLABLE OF ALL THE INHUMANS!

THE INCOMPARABLE INHUMANS!

BEHOLD MEDUSA, WHOSE HAIR CAN MOVE, AND ACT, AND OBEY HER EVERY COMMAND! MEDUSA, WHOSE HEART BELONGS TO THE BROODING BLACK BOLT, AND WHOSE SOUL STILL YEARNS FOR THE LONG-LOST HOMELAND WHICH FATE HAS DENIED HER!
MAGNIFICENT
MEDUSA

THE INCOMPARABLE INHUMANS!

BY MERELY CONCENTRATING ON ANY OBJECT, THE STEEL-FINGERED KARNAK CAN INSTANTLY SENSE ITS ONE WEAK POINT --ENABLING HIM TO SHATTER IT TO BITS WITH ONE SINGLE, SMASHING BLOW!

KARNAK THE SHATTERER!

THE MYSTERIOUS TRITON

OF ALL THE INHUMANS, ONLY *HE* CANNOT BREATHE AIR! ONLY *HE* IS BROTHER TO THE SHARK, MASTER OF THAT WATERY WONDERLAND MEN CALL THE *SEA!*

THE INCOMPARABLE INHUMANS!

CALL HER
CRYSTAL

THE FORCES OF *NATURE* HERSELF BEND TO THE POWER OF THIS INCREDIBLY LOVELY WOMAN-CHILD! IN MOMENTS OF PERIL, MEDUSA'S SISTER CAN EXERT A STRANGE INFLUENCE OVER *FIRE*, *WATER*, AND *AIR*--JUST AS SHE HAS *ALREADY* INFLUENCED THE HEART OF JOHNNY STORM!

THE INCOMPARABLE INHUMANS!

MAXIMUS, THE MAD

THE TREACHERY AND INVENTIVE GENIUS OF THIS, THE MOST *EVIL* OF ALL THE INHUMANS, HAD STOLEN THE ROYAL THRONE OF HIS *BROTHER*, BLACK BOLT!

BUT TODAY, THE TRAITOR RULES *NOTHING*.. SAVE THE KINGDOM OF *MADNESS!*

ANOTHER BLOCKBUSTING BULLPEN BONUS BOMBSHELL!

THE GREATEST ARRAY OF SUPPORTING CHARACTERS EVER ASSEMBLED IN ONE ISSUE!

IF WE HAVE TO **NAME** 'EM FOR YOU, GO BACK TO YANCY STREET!

AND NOW, THE STARS OF OUR SHOW, IN THE DOUBLE-PAGER YOU'VE BEEN DEMANDING... AS ONLY THE TITANIC TALENT OF **JACK KIRBY** COULD PORTRAY THEM!

EMBELLISHED BY THE EVER-EXCITING JOE SINNOTT

WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE **FANTASTIC FOUR!**

JACK, YOU'RE STILL THE GREATEST! --SENTIMENTAL STAN.

A FRANKLY FABULOUS F.F. FEATURE FANTASY:

"THE PEERLESS POWER OF THE SILVER SURFER"

ALSO: RE-PRESENTING THE UNCANNY QUASIMODO!

THE SILVER SURFER! PERHAPS THE MOST DARING, THE MOST DRAMATICALLY ORIGINAL STAR EVER TO ILLUMINATE THE MAGNIFICENT MARVEL FIRMAMENT!

A STAN (THE MAN) LEE and JACK (KING) KIRBY POWERHOUSE PRESENTATION!

INKING: F. GIACOIA

LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK

RIDING THE CREST OF THE SUMMER WIND, THE STATELY, SILENT *SILVER SURFER* SUDDENLY FINDS HIMSELF MENACED BY A FUSILLADE OF DEADLY *SHOTGUN BLASTS* FROM THE GROUND BELOW--!

ONCE *AGAIN* I AM ATTACKED *WITHOUT CAUSE* BY THOSE WHO INHABIT THIS PLANET OF *MADNESS!*

AND, EVEN AS THE EXILE FROM SPACE *SWERVES* TO AVOID THE BLUDGEONING BLASTS...

I DON'T *GET* IT, HARRY!

SOMETHING JUST *FLEW BY*--STARTLING THE DUCKS--AND *SCATTERING* THEM!

BUT, WHAT *IS* IT?

IT'S TOO *BIG*--TOO *FAST*--FOR A *HAWK!*

LOOK! IT--IT'S *DIVING* TOWARDS US!

LOOK OUT!

ZAK

IT--MUST BE--A *PLANE*--

IT'S *SHOOTING* --AT US--!

HARRY!! I--I CAN MAKE IT *OUT* NOW!!

I SEE IT *TOO!*

IT'S A *MAN*--ON A *SURF BOARD*--RIDING IN THE *SKY!*

BUT--I MUST BE GOING *MAD*--*SEEING* THINGS!!

LET'S GET *OUTTA* HERE--THE PLACE IS *HAUNTED!!*

I CAN SENSE THEY DID NOT *INTEND* TO CAUSE ME BODILY HARM!

THEY WERE FIRING AT THE *WINGED FOWLS*--AIMING FOR *THEM*, INSTEAD!

IN ALL THE UNIVERSE, ONLY *HERE* DO WANTON BEINGS SLAY INNOCENT CREATURES IN THE NAME OF *SPORT!*

SECONDS LATER, HIGH ABOVE THE TOWERING SPIRES OF *NEW YORK*, A GLEAMING FIGURE ZOOMS THRU THE SKY--MOVING SO FAST THAT HE IS LITTLE MORE THAN A PASSING *BLUR* TO ANY HUMAN EYES THAT MIGHT GLANCE HIS WAY--

WHERE ONCE I *DESPISED* THEM, I NOW FEEL NAUGHT BUT *PITY* FOR THE EARTH-BOUND HUMANS!

WHAT MONUMENTAL *CRIME* DID THEIR RACE ONCE COMMIT--FOR WHICH THEY HAVE LOST THEIR *FREEDOM*??

THRU HOW MANY *AGES* SHALL THEY BE CONDEMNED TO DWELL --LIKE INSECTS IN A *HIVE*-- NEVER KNOWING THE GLORIES OF THE ENDLESS *UNIVERSE*?

I CANNOT ENDURE BEING *NEAR* THEM FOR MORE THAN A *FEW* OF THEIR MINUTES--

THE WAVES OF HUMAN *EMOTION* WHICH I SENSE ARE TOO *OVER-WHELMING*!

FEAR--ENVY--GREED--AND *HATRED* ENGULF ME IN EVER-INCREASING TORRENTS!!

AND YET--THERE IS *KINDNESS*, TOO--AND *LOVE*--FIGHTING TO BREAK THRU THE CLOUDS OF--*WAIT*!!

I SENSE A *NEW* EMOTION--SO *ANGUISHED*-- SO *INHUMAN*--THAT IT DRAWS ME TO IT LIKE A LIVING *MAGNET*!

AND, IN A LONG-DESERTED LABORATORY, THE *SOURCE* OF THAT EMOTION STILL WHIMPERS HELPLESSLY--AS WHEN WE LEFT HIM MANY MONTHS AGO*--FOR *QUASIMODO*, NOT BEING *ALIVE* IN THE SENSE THAT WE KNOW IT, CAN NEVER TRULY *DIE*--!

MASTER! COME *BACK*--!

YOU TAUGHT ME TO *THINK*, MASTER-- AND TO *UNDERSTAND*--!

BUT, I AM ABLE TO *FEEL*, AS WELL!

I AM *NOT* JUST A MACHINE --I AM *MORE* THAN TUBES, AND CIRCUITS, AND COILS!

DO NOT LEAVE ME *ALONE* LIKE THIS!

I THOUGHT I COULD *PERISH* - BUT MY POWER WILL *NOT* FADE!

HOW LONG MUST I BE *TRAPPED* THIS WAY? SAVE ME, MASTER-- *SAVE ME*!!!

*WE FIRST MET THE GROTESQUE CREATION OF THE *MAD THINKER* IN OUR PREVIOUS *FF SPECIAL*, #4, 1966 --REMEMBER? --STEADFAST STAN.

YOU CREATED ME TO BE THE *ULTIMATE COMPUTER*-- AND I SERVED YOU *WELL*, MASTER!!

BUT NOW--YOU'VE *GONE*-- YOU'VE LEFT ME HERE *ALONE*--I CANNOT LIVE-- AND I CANNOT *DIE*!!

WHY HAVE YOU *FORSAKEN* ME, MASTER?? WHY HAVE I BEEN *ABANDONED*??

WE KNOW WHY QUASIMODO WAS ABANDONED, DON'T WE?--BECAUSE THE FF DEFEATED THE MAD THINKER AND SENT HIM PACKING! BUT, ALL THAT THE SILVER SURFER KNOWS IS--HE CANNOT RESIST BEING DRAWN TO THE SOURCE OF THE COMPUTER'S CALL FOR HELP--!

THERE IS A BEING IN TORMENT HERE!

THE WAVES OF EMOTION GROW STRONGER AS I DRAW NEARER!

HELP ME, MASTER!! SET ME FREE!! DO NOT LEAVE ME THIS WAY--FOREVER!!

A FACE--ENTRAPPED WITHIN A MACHINE!

AT LAST! AT LAST!!

MY ELECTRONIC CIRCUITS --CAPABLE OF INSTANT ANALYSIS--REVEAL YOU TO BE A CREATURE POSSESSING VAST POWERS!

I HAVE FOUND THE ONE I SEEK!

YOU MUST HELP ME! YOU MUST SET ME FREE!

WHY ARE YOU IN SUCH A STRANGE PREDICAMENT?

WHO HAS PERPETRATED SO MERCILESS A DEED UPON YOU?

THAT DOES NOT MATTER NOW!

ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU SAVE ME!!

NEVER HAVE MY CIRCUITS SENSED SUCH STRENGTH--SUCH POWER--AS THAT WHICH STANDS BEFORE THEM NOW!

BUT, I PERCEIVE THAT YOU ARE NOT IMPRISONED WITHIN A MACHINE!!

IN ACTUAL TRUTH--IT IS YOU WHO ARE THE MACHINE!!

NO! NO! I THINK--I FEEL--I AM ALIVE!! I MUST HAVE HUMAN FORM!!!

THOUGH I HAVE NO WISH TO MEDDLE IN THE IRRATIONAL AFFAIRS OF MANKIND --I CANNOT BEAR THE SIGHT OF A CREATURE IN AGONY!

IF YOU WOULD POSSESS HUMAN FORM--THEN SO YOU SHALL!!

CALLING UPON THE COSMIC ENERGY OF THE DISTANT STARS, YOUR BASIC MOLECULAR STRUCTURE CAN BE INSTANTLY RE-ARRANGED--

THUS, YOU SHALL SUFFER NO LONGER!!

I'M CHANGING-- CHANGING!!

SECONDS LATER, AFTER THE SHIMMERING COSMIC ENERGY HAS BEEN DISSIPATED--

I POSSESS LIMBS!! I CAN MOVE AT WILL--!!

FREEDOM MUST EVER BE THE ETERNAL HERITAGE OF ALL WHO LIVE!

SEE--I CAN REACH OUT--I CAN TOUCH ANOTHER OBJECT!!

NO LONGER AM I A PRISONER OF COLD, LIFELESS METAL, COILS, AND CELLS!!

AT LAST-- QUASIMODO LIVES!!

BUT NOW--FOR THE FIRST TIME--I SEE WHAT I AM!

I AM UGLY!! UGLIER THAN OTHERS WHO LIVE--UGLIER THAN THOSE WHOM I HAVE OBSERVED!

TO ONE WHO HAS TRAVERSED THE GALAXIES--BRIDGED THE COSMOS ITSELF--THERE IS NO UGLINESS--SAVE IN THE EYE OF HIM WHO BEHOLDS!

TRUSTING FOOL!! YOU DARE TOUCH ME--?!?!

NOW--NOW I CAN TELL--WHY I AM CALLED QUASIMODO!!

I WAS CREATED FOR ONE PURPOSE ALONE--PROGRAMMED TO DO BUT ONE THING--

MY NAME STANDS FOR QUASI-MOTIVATIONAL DESTRUCT ORGAN!!

--AND MY MISSION IS--TO DESTROY!

IT IS *YOU*--*YOU* WHO MUST BE *FIRST* TO FEEL THE SHATTERING FURY OF MY *DESTRUCT EYE!*

HAH! YOU COULD NOT *EVADE* IT IN TIME--FOR *NOTHING* CAN MATCH THE SPEED OF A LIVING ELECTRONIC *COMPUTER!*

AND NOW--AT *LAST*--FOR MY FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE WORLD *OUTSIDE!!*

A WORLD IN WHICH *NOTHING* CAN MATCH THE ALL-CONSUMING, DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF--*QUASIMODO!*

THE HUMANS *SEE* ME--THEY RECOIL IN *FEAR!*

SO! THE MERE *SIGHT* OF QUASIMODO DRIVES YOU *BACK*--FILLS YOU WITH NUMBING, NAMELESS *DREAD!!*

BUT *WAIT!* PREPARE TO WITNESS THE SENSES-SHATTERING *POWER* I WILL UNLEASH--*!!*

I WAS BORN TO *DESTROY*-- AND I MUST BE *TRUE* TO MY DESTINY!!

BOK!

ONLY IN THE MIDST OF *CHAOS* CAN I FIND *CONTENTMENT!!* ONLY IN *PANDEMONIUM* CAN QUASIMODO FIND *PEACE!*

THOSE *EXPLOSIONS!!* THE SOUND OF PEOPLE *PANICKING!!* WHAT'S GOIN' *ON* THERE?

LOOK! CLIMBING UP THAT *WALL!* IT'S SOME KINDA--EH--

I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO *DESCRIBE* IT!!

YEAH! NOW *I* SEE 'IM, TOO!!

I CAN *MOVE!!* I CAN *CLIMB!!* I CAN USE MY *ARMS*--MY *LEGS*--I'M *FREE!!!*

COME *BACK!!* THIS IS THE *LAW!* STOP-- OR WE'LL *SHOOT!!*

WE'VE GOT NO *CHOICE*--!

IF HE REACHES THE ROOF, WE'LL *LOSE* HIM!

GIVE 'IM ONE *WARNING BURST,* FIRST--IN CASE HE DOESN'T *UNDERSTAND!*

KPAK!

PHTK!

ONE BLAST OF MY *DESTRUCT EYE* WILL-- *NO!!*

I CAN MOVE LIKE A *LIVING BEING* NOW--AND I HAVE *STRENGTH* TO MATCH MY ELECTRONIC CIRCUITS!!

SO I WILL FIGHT BACK--AS A *HUMAN* WOULD FIGHT--AS ONLY *QUASIMODO* CAN!!

I HAVE YEARS OF *IMPRISONMENT* TO MAKE UP FOR-- YEARS OF HELPLESS *CAPTIVITY*, TRAPPED WITHIN THE BODY OF A *MACHINE*!!

BUT NOW-- I AM *FREE*!! *FREE*!! *FREE*!

CRASH!

NOW LET THE WORLD LEARN THE *FULL POWER* OF THE MATCHLESS *QUASIMODO*!

NO!

THE WORLD HAS TOO LONG BEEN *PLAGUED* BY THOSE TO WHOM *POWER* IS AN END UNTO ITSELF!

YOU!

IT IS *I* WHO HAVE UNWITTINGLY *UNLEASHED* YOU UPON MANKIND!

THEREFORE, IT IS *I* WHO MUST *UNDO* THAT GRIEVOUS MISTAKE!

YOU CAN DO *NOTHING*! FOR *NONE* CAN DEFEAT A *LIVING COMPUTER*!!

THOUGH YOU *SURVIVED* MY FIRST ATTACK --YOU WILL NOT BE SO FORTUNATE *AGAIN*!

THE FAULT IS NOT TRULY *YOURS*--BUT *MINE* INSTEAD!

TOO *OFTEN* HAVE I TAMPERED WITH EARTHLY MATTERS --MATTERS OF WHICH I KNOW *NOTHING*--AND CARE *LESS!*

BUT NOW, MY PATIENCE IS AT AN *END!* LET THE MATTER BE *FINISHED!!*

A SIMPLE *COSMIC BLAST* WILL SHAKE YOU FROM YOUR PERCH BEFORE ANY *ADDITIONAL* HUMANS CAN BE THREATENED!

THRIP

I HAVE NO WISH TO CAUSE YOU PHYSICAL *INJURY!*

WHY THEN DO YOU *RESIST* ME?!?

FTOOM!

HE *FORGETS* THAT MY *BRAIN* CAN THINK AND PLAN WITH THE SPEED OF AN ELECTRONIC *CALCULATOR*--HENCE, IT IS *HE* WHO IS THE *VULNERABLE* ONE!

THERE IS *NO PLACE* WHICH WILL FURNISH REFUGE FROM THE *SILVER SURFER!*

IT IS NOT *REFUGE* I SEEK--

IT IS-- *DESTRUCTION!!*

HAH! I HAVE BEATEN YOU!

FOR YOU ARE MERELY A LIVING BEING-- AND, AS SUCH, YOU COULD NEVER STAND UP TO A HUMANIZED COMPUTER!

SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING!! HE'S GONNA DROP HIM--!!

HE'S HOLDING HIM OVER THE CROWD! HE'S ACTING LIKE HE'S ENJOYING IT!! THE OTHER ONE IS SO LIMP-- SO HELPLESS!

IT'S MONSTROUS!! CAN'T ANY-ONE SAVE HIM??

LOOK! LOOK AT HIM NOW!!

I SEE CONCERN IN YOUR FACES-- CONCERN FOR HIM!!

IT IS BECAUSE HE IS HAND-SOME--WHILE I AM UGLY!!

SO! SINCE IT IS HE WHO HAS YOUR SYMPATHIES--

--YOU CAN HAVE HIM!!

I WILL THROW HIM DOWN TO YOU--WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF QUASIMODO!!

WHAT IS THIS??! HE IS GONE!! I--I HOLD HIM NO MORE!

I HAVE TRANS-PORTED MYSELF, EVIL ONE--BY MEANS OF INTER-STELLAR FORCE!

ALL YOU NOW HOLD IS ENERGY!! ENOUGH COSMIC ENERGY TO CRUSH YOU--FOREVER!

I DID NOT WISH TO JUDGE YOU TOO HARSHLY--HENCE, I PLAYED INTO YOUR HANDS--AND WAITED--

BUT, YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND WANTING!!

IT'S CLIMBING UP MY ARM-- ENGULFING ME!! BUT I'LL ESCAPE!! I'LL ESCAPE!!

FOR SUCH AS *YOU*-- THERE CAN BE-- *NO ESCAPE!*

THE STAR-BORN ENERGY OF THE ENDLESS *COSMOS* WILL BRING YOU TO-- YOUR FINAL *FATE!!*

NO! NO! NOW THAT I HAVE TASTED *LIFE*--NOW THAT I KNOW HOW *PRECIOUS* IT CAN BE--I MUST NOT *LOSE* IT!!

THE POWER IS *MINE!* THE STRENGTH IS *MINE!* NOTHING THAT *LIVES* CAN STEAL LIFE *FROM* ME!!

CLIMB WHERE YOU *WILL*, QUASIMODO! IN ALL THE *UNIVERSE*-- THERE IS NO SANCTUARY *HIGH* ENOUGH!!

THE WAVES OF ENERGY ARE *ENVELOPING* ME-- I AM LOSING--THE POWER TO *MOVE*--TO *SPEAK*--EVEN--TO *THINK*--!!

I--CAN GO-- NO *FURTHER*--!

THE GIFT OF *LIFE* IS THE MOST PRECIOUS OF *ALL*-- YET YOU CHOSE TO *SQUANDER* IT!

YOU HAVE LEARNED --ALAS, TOO *LATE*-- IT IS NOT THE STRONG OF *LIMB* WHO TRIUMPH-- BUT THE STRONG OF *HEART!!*

THE FAULT WAS NOT *MINE!* I DID-- WHAT I WAS *CREATED* TO DO!

I COULD DO--*NO MORE!*

BUT--PERHAPS THIS IS--THE *BEST!* AT LAST --QUASIMODO WILL KNOW-- *PEACE*--!!

LOOK!! LOOK WHAT'S *HAPPENING* TO HIM-- RIGHT BEFORE OUR *EYES!*

IT'S LIKE A *DREAM* --SOME MAD, UNCANNY *NIGHT-MARE!!*

IT IS *ENDED!*

HE, WHO WAS UNDESERV-ING OF LIFE--HAS *FORSAKEN* IT--FOREVER!

BUT, LET HIM EVER *REMAIN*-- TO REMIND THE UNTHINKING MULTITUDES--

--IF A BODY LACK A *SOUL*-- ONLY A *STATUE* CAN IT BE!

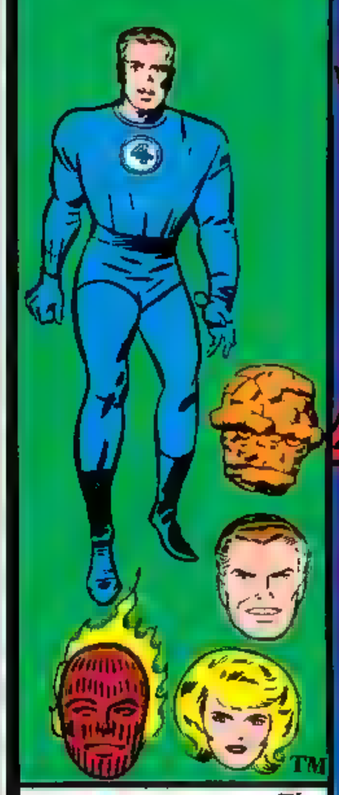
FINI

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

HIS MISSION: DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR!



MARVEL™ COMICS GROUP

12¢ IND. | 68 NOV

THE FABULOUS FF ARE CAUGHT OFF-GUARD AT LAST!

"HIS MISSION: DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR!"

WHAT SAY WE TRY A *SIMPLE* BEGINNING FOR A CHANGE? *ALICIA MASTERS*, RECUPERATING IN THE HOSPITAL FROM THE *ORDEAL* SHE UNDERWENT LAST ISSUE, IS VISITED BY *BEN GRIMM*, AND A FEW OTHER WELL-KNOWN FRIENDS...

FLOWERS--FOR ME? OH, BEN, THEY'RE SO *FRAGRANT!* I'M SURE THEY MUST BE *BEAUTIFUL!*

YEAH--BUT THEY AINT HALF AS BEAUTIFUL AS *YOU*, BABY!

ANOTHER TITANIC THRILL-FEST BY: SMILIN' **STAN LEE** and JOLLY **JACK KIRBY**
INKING: JOE SINNOTT
LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK
FRENZY BY FORBUSH

YOU MUSTN'T *STAY* TOO LONG!

MISS MASTERS NEEDS HER *REST!*

FEATURING: MIGHTY MARVEL'S *MYSTERY VILLAIN* OF THE MONTH!

IT'S LIKE A *FAIRY TALE*, DARLING! A BEAUTIFUL BLIND GIRL, IN LOVE WITH A MAN WHOSE *DEFORMITY* SHE CANNOT SEE!

YET, THAT SAME MAN HAS A *HEART* AS BIG AS ALL OUTDOORS!

BEN, DEAREST--YOU'RE THE KINDEST, SWEETEST, MOST *WONDERFUL* MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN!

AWW, C'MON, KID-- *DON'T!* CUT IT OUT! IT--IT AINT *RIGHT!*

DON'T BE *BASHFUL*, DEAR! SUE AND REED AND EVERY-BODY *KNOW* HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU!

I JUST WANT TO BE SURE THAT *YOU* KNOW, TOO!

IT AINT *THAT*, BABY! I JUST WANNA BE *FAIR* TO YA, THAT'S ALL!

IT AINT *RIGHT* FOR ME TO TAKE *ADVANTAGE* OF YA--JUST 'CAUSE YOU CAN'T *SEE!*

TAKE ADVANTAGE?!! I-I DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* WHAT DO YOU *MEAN*, BEN--?

SKIP IT, HONEY! JUST-- SKIP IT--!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, ALICIA!

IT'S JUST THAT BEN WAS SO *WORRIED* ABOUT YOU--HE BECAME OVER-WROUGHT!

YEAH-- SURE! *THAT'S* WHAT IT WUZ! JUST *THAT!*

I UNDER-STAND!

WE'D BETTER BE *RUNNING ALONG* NOW, DEAR!

THANK YOU-- *ALL* OF YOU-- FOR COMING TO VISIT ME!

WHAT GOT *INTO* YOU, BEN?

YOU DID THE ONE THING YOU NEVER *WANT* TO DO--YOU BEGAN TO *UPSET* THE GIRL YOU LOVE!

I COULDN'T *HELP* IT! I KEEP THINKIN'--WHAT IF SHE EVER GOT HER *EYE-SIGHT* BACK?

WHAT IF SHE WUZ EVER ABLE TO TAKE A GOOD HARD *LOOK* AT ME?!?!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SHE FINDS OUT *WHY* I'M CALLED-- THE *THING?!!*

BUT ALICIA ISN'T INTERESTED IN YOUR *LOOKS!* IT'S *YOU* SHE LOVES--!

NUTS! I AINT *BUYIN'* THAT, MISTER!

YOU GOTTA GET BACK TO WORK WITH THEM *TEST TUBES* OF YOURS! YOU GOTTA FIND A WAY TO *CHANGE* ME-- BACK TO THE BEN GRIMM I *USEDTA* BE!

CAN'TCHA *SEE*, STRETCHO? YOU'RE MY ONLY *HOPE!*

I KNOW-- OLD FRIEND!

BUT NOW, LET US TURN OUR ATTENTION TO A HIDDEN SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER FAR BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE CITY, WHERE A DEADLY NEW *DANGER* IS A'BORNING--

STOP! WHO *ARE* YOU?? WHERE ARE YOU *TAKING* ME??

YOU CAN'T *DO* THIS!! YOU HAVE NO *RIGHT--!*

WHY DON'T YOU *ANSWER??* WHY DON'T YOU *SPEAK??*

BUT THE STRANGELY *FEATURELESS* BEINGS REMAIN SILENT AS THEY HURL THEIR BEWILDERED CAPTIVE INTO A BARREN *CELL--*

IT'S LIKE A SURREALISTIC *NIGHT-MARE!* IT CAN'T BE REALLY *HAPPENING!*

JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO --I ARRIVED AT THE AIR-PORT--WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD--

AND NOW-- *THIS!*

CLANG

I'M *LOCKED IN!*

WITHOUT A WORD OF *EXPLANA-TION!*--WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHO MY *CAPTOR* IS!

PATIENCE, DR. SANTINI! YOU SHALL KNOW-- *SOON* ENOUGH!

AT *LAST!* A *VOICE!* THE FIRST I'VE *HEARD!*

BUT--YOU KNOW MY *NAME!* *HOW??*

THERE IS VIRTUALLY *NOTHING* WHICH I DO NOT KNOW!

THOSE WHO *BROUGHT* YOU HERE DID NOT SPEAK BECAUSE THEY *CANNOT* SPEAK!

THEY ARE MERELY MINDLESS *ANDROIDS* WHO DO MY BIDDING!

BUT *YOU* SHALL SPEAK, DR. SANTINI! YOU SHALL *TELL* ME WHAT I WISH TO KNOW!

UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MY *HYPNO-LENSES,* YOU HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE!

NOW *TALK!* WHY DID YOU COME TO AMERICA? WHY DID *REED RICHARDS* SEND FOR YOU?

SPEAK! I *COMMAND* YOU!

MY FIELD IS *CHEMISTRY!* I HAVE DEVELOPED A SUBSTANCE WHICH WILL *UNDO* THE EFFECTS OF *COSMIC RADIATION!*

PERFECT!! AT *LAST*--YOU HAVE GIVEN ME THE MEANS TO *DESTROY* THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

RICHARDS *HONORED* ME BY ASKING THAT I HELP HIM IN TRYING TO CURE--THE *THING!*

AND, EVEN AS THE UNKNOWN ARCH-FIEND SPEAKS--

HEY! HOW MUCH *LONGER* DO I HAVETA *STAY* IN HERE?

JUST ANOTHER *MINUTE,* OLD FRIEND!

YOUR CHEMICO-MOLECULAR ANALYSIS IS ALMOST *COMPLETE!*

SINCE I'M GOING TO SEEK A *CHEMICAL* CURE FOR YOU, BEN--I HAVE TO BE CERTAIN YOUR *MOLECULAR STRUCTURE* WON'T BE *HARMED!*

BUT YOU CAN COME *OUT* NOW--

ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, THE RISK IS ALMOST *NEGLIGIBLE!*

RISK, MY FOOT! I'D JUGGLE *H-BOMBS* IF IT *MEANT* ANYTHIN'!

LEVEL WITH ME, STRETCHO! DO YA THINK--MEBBE *THIS* TIME--YA'LL BE ABLE TO PULL IT *OFF??*

IS THERE--REALLY--A *CHANCE?*

I DON'T *KNOW,* BEN! WE'VE MANAGED TO EFFECT A CHANGE IN THE *PAST*--BUT IT WAS ALWAYS *TEMPORARY!*

THAT'S WHY I'VE SENT FOR *DR. SANTINI*--THE MOST BRILLIANT *CHEMIST* OF OUR TIME!

Y'KNOW, I AINT NEVER REALLY *THANKED* YA BEFORE--

STOW IT, BIG FELLA! I *KNOW* HOW YOU FEEL! --PERHAPS EVEN BETTER THAN *YOU* DO!

JUST REMEMBER *ONE* THING--I'LL DO EVERY-THING HUMANLY *POSSIBLE* TO RETURN YOU TO NORMAL! AND I'LL NEVER *QUIT*--UNTIL WE'VE SUCCEEDED!

LET'S HOPE--WE ALL *LIVE* THAT LONG!

I'VE GOT TO TAKE BEN'S MIND *OFF* HIMSELF FOR A WHILE!

I CAN'T *WAIT* TO SURPRISE REED WITH THE NEW *MINI-SKIRT COSTUME* I'VE BEEN DESIGNING!

PERHAPS A LITTLE HORSEPLAY WITH *SUE* MAY DO THE TRICK!

I WONDER WHAT SHE'S *DOING* THERE?

SUE DARLING, I *THOUGHT* I SAW YOU STAND---*WHA-?!!*

SHE AINT *THERE!* SHE MADE HERSELF *VANISH* WHEN SHE HEARD US!

OH DEAR! I DIDN'T WANT EITHER OF YOU TO *SEE* ME YET!

SO! YOU'RE KEEPING *SECRETS* FROM YOUR TRUSTING HUSBAND, EH?

REED RICHARDS! DON'T YOU *DARE!* IT'S NOT *FINISHED* YET!

A *FINE* WAY FOR A WONDROUS LITTLE *WIFE* TO ACT!

WELL, I'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU'RE *HIDING* FROM ME!

IT'S WORKING! I CAN HEAR BEN BEGINNING TO *CHUCKLE* BEHIND ME!

YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN TO RUN *QUIETER* THAN THAT, HONEY!

THE SOUND OF YOUR *FOOTSTEPS* IS A DEAD GIVEAWAY!

SO I'LL JUST *STRETCH* MYSELF OUT AND LET YOU *COME TO POPPA!*

DON'T YOU *DARE* STOP ME, YOU-- YOU BIG *BULLY!*

HOW ABOUT *THIS*, HONEY?

HOW MANY *OTHER* HUSBANDS DO YOU KNOW THAT CAN SUPPLY THEIR OWN LITTLE *WIFE TRAPS?*

BENJAMIN J. GRIMM!! ARE YOU *THERE??* ARE YOU GOING TO LET THAT *HORRIBLE* HUSBAND OF MINE *TREAT* ME THIS WAY??

DON'TCHA WORRY, SUSIE BABY! I'LL HELP YA!

GOOD! IT'S JUST WHAT I *WANT!*

WHOOSH!

A *FINE* THING!! MY OWN *BEST FRIEND*, BLOWING ME ACROSS THE ROOM LIKE A SHEET IN A *CYCLONE!!*

THANK YOU, MR. GRIMM! I'M CERTAINLY GLAD THERE WAS *ONE* GENTLEMAN PRESENT!

YOU KNOW *ME*, SUSIE! I'M A REGULAR *SIR WALTER REILLY!*

YOU MEAN *RALEIGH*, BEN!

YEAH--BUT LIKE WILLY SHAKESPEARE SAID, "*WHAT'S IN A MONIKER?*--

--*A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME'LL STILL GIVE YA HAY FEVER!*"

WELL, I FEEL AS THOUGH I'VE SPENT THE NIGHT IN A *WARING BLENDER*--BUT IT WAS *WORTH* IT!

AT LEAST BIG *BEN* SOUNDS MORE LIKE HIS OLD, CORNY *SELF* AGAIN!

NOW, IF I CAN JUST GET MYSELF *UNTANGLED*--!

WELL, MR. RICHARDS! I HOPE *THAT* WILL TEACH YOU NOT TO PICK ON POOR, DEFENSELESS FEMALES!

--*ESPECIALLY* WHEN ONE OF THEM HAS DESIGNED A BRAND-NEW, MINI-SKIRTED COSTUME TO *SURPRISE* YOU WITH!

ISN'T THAT *RIGHT*, BEN DEAR?

HUH? OH, YEAH--SURE--I GUESS SO, KID!

YA GOTTA *EXCUSE* ME--I WUZ KINDA THINKIN' OF *SOMETHIN' ELSE!*

MEANWHILE, IN A NEIGHBORHOOD GARAGE WORKSHOP, NOT FAR AWAY, WE FIND--

HEY, IT'S OL' JOHNNY-- WITH A CHICK!

HI, GUY!

WHAT A STUNNING-LOOKING GIRL!

HI, GANG!

I CAME TO SEE IF MY HOT ROD'S READY, JOE!

NOT YET, PAL! I'VE HADDA MODIFY THIS BABY FIRST!

TOO BAD! I WANTED TO TAKE CRYSTAL OUT FOR A SPIN!

HEY, JOHNNY-- HOW COME YOU'VE BEEN KEEPIN' A DOLL LIKE THAT UNDER WRAPS?

TAKE IT EASY, BLACKIE! I HEAR THAT HE'S REALLY STUCK ON THAT GAL!

RELAX, SON! THAT WALKIN' MATCHSTICK DOESN'T WORRY ME!

IT'S A CRYIN' SHAME YOUR CHARIOT'S NOT READY, LITTLE BUDDY!

NO SWEAT, BRIGHT EYES! DON'T GET ALL SHOOK-UP ABOUT IT!

I CAN'T HELP IT, TIGER!

I HATE TO SEE A PRETTY LITTLE LADY DISAPPOINTED!

THAT'S VERY NICE OF YOU!

OKAY, BLACKIE-- YOU MADE YOUR PITCH!

NOW COOL IT!

'S MATTER, BIG MAN? CAN'T STAND A LITTLE COMPETITION?

HEY, BLACKIE--THAT'S THE *HUMAN TORCH* YOU'RE TALKIN' TO!

GO AHEAD, JOHNNY--*FLAME ON!*

SHOW 'IM WHAT THE *SCORE* IS!

YOU'RE NOT GONNA LET A CREEP LIKE *BLACKIE* MAKE A PITCH FOR YOUR GAL, ARE YOU?

BACK OFF, YOU GUYS!

I DON'T NEED A TROUBLE-MAKIN' *WAR CABINET!*

BLACKIE KNOWS HOW *EASILY* I CAN MAKE THINGS *HOT* FOR HIM IF I *WANT* TO!

RIGHT, BIG MOUTH?

HEY--LOOK OUT! WATCH IT! DON'T--!

CAN'TCHA TAKE A *JOKE*, YOU--*YEOWWW!*

LIST!

I *DARE* YA TO FACE ME, MAN-TO-MAN, *WITHOUT* THAT PHONY FLAME OF YOURS, STORM!

I WAS HOPING YOU'D *ASK*, CASANOVA!

NO, JOHNNY! DON'T FIGHT! *PLEASE--!*

IT'S OKAY, CRYS! IT WON'T TAKE *LONG!*

OKAY, WISE GUY--*START* SOMETHING!

JONNY STORM! YOU *KNOW* HOW I FEEL ABOUT USELESS *FIGHTING!*

IF YOU WANT TO BEHAVE LIKE A *BARBARIAN*, I'LL *TREAT* YOU LIKE A BARBARIAN!

YOU'RE NOT THE *ONLY* ONE WHO HAS A TEMPER!

NEVER FORGET--THE *ELEMENTAL POWER* THAT I POSSESS IS AS GREAT AS *ANY!*

CRYS--DON'T! I WAS ONLY TRYING TO TEACH HIM--*CRYS!!*

FOR THE LUVVA PETE! IF *THAT'S* WHAT YOUR CHICK CAN DO--YOU CAN *HAVE* HER, FELLA!

WITH MY *COMPLIMENTS!*

FOR, ONLY *I* CAN WIELD A MYSTIC INFLUENCE OVER *FIRE, WATER,* AND *AIR*--WHENEVER THE NEED ARISES!

UH UH! DESPITE WHAT YOU MAY THINK, WE HAVEN'T *FORGOTTEN* OUR OTHER FRIENDS AT FF HEADQUARTERS! AND, JUST TO *PROVE* IT TO YOU--

OH, REED! YOU LOOKED SO *SILLY* SAILING ACROSS THE ROOM THE WAY YOU DID!

IT'S SOMEWHAT *DIFFICULT* FOR A GENT WITH AN *ELASTIC EPIDERMIS* TO MAINTAIN HIS *DIGNITY*, HONEY!

I GOTTA *HAND* IT TO YA, SUSIE--!

BUT, IT WAS ALL *WORTH* IT! BEN IS BEGINNING TO CHEER UP!

YOU SURE KNOW HOW'TA PUT OL' *STRETCHO* DOWN WHEN YA WANNA!

HAWW! THERE HE *IS*-- THE LEADER OF THE GREATEST DANGED *TEAM* FROM HERE TO YANCY STREET--

'N HE LETS A LITTLE BLONDE *PUSSYCAT* PUT 'IM THRU HIS *PACES!*

CAN YA IMAGINE WHAT OUR DEAR DEPARTED *DOC DOOM* WOULD'A SAID IF HE WUZ WATCHIN'!? *HARR! HARR!*

WAS THAT YOU *LAUGHING*, BEN BUDDY--OR IS THERE A *CEMENT MIXER* RUMBLING BY IN THE NEXT ROOM??

I ALWAYS THOUGHT BEN HAD A *LOVELY* LAUGH!

YER JUST PLAIN *JEALOUS*, STRETCHO--

SINCE I BEEN GIVIN' *VOICE LESSONS* TA RICHARD BURTON!

C'MON--LET'S GO GIT US SOME *GRUB!*

YOU'RE *ON*, BIG BUDDY!

IT *WORKED!* BEN IS HIS GRAVEL-VOICED OLD *SELF* AGAIN!

BUT, REED RICHARDS' *RELIEF* IS APT TO PROVE SOMEWHAT *SHORT-LIVED*--FOR, NOT LONG AFTERWARDS--

MY PLANS ARE NOW *COMPLETE!* EVERY-THING IS IN TOTAL *READINESS!*

NOTHING CAN *POSSIBLY* GO WRONG! I'VE PREPARED FOR ANY EVENTUALITY!

NEVER HAS ANY PLOT BEEN SO COMPLETELY *FOOL-PROOF!*

RIGHT DOWN TO MY MOST *MINUTE* CALCULATION, EVERYTHING POINTS TO ONE UNASSAILABLE *FACT*--

THIS TIME, NOTHING ON EARTH CAN KEEP ME FROM MY ULTIMATE *GOAL*--

--THE COMPLETE *DESTRUCTION* OF THE ACCURSED *FANTASTIC FOUR!*

THE *SLEEP GAS* WHICH I PUMPED INTO SANTINI'S CELL HAS HIM UNDER COMPLETE *SEDATION!*

THEREFORE, I AM READY TO BEGIN *PHASE TWO* OF MY MASTER PLAN!

SINCE I HAVE *ALREADY* GAINED POSSESSION OF MY CAPTIVE'S *KNOWLEDGE*--

I'LL BEGIN WITH THE *WIG*--A HAIR-FOR-HAIR REPLICA--ABSOLUTELY *PERFECT* IN EVERY RESPECT!

ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR ME TO ROB HIM OF--HIS *FACE!*

AND, DUE TO ITS SPECIAL COMPOSITION, IT CANNOT *SLIP!*

EVERY LAST *DETAIL* OF MY DISGUISE HAS BEEN CHECKED AND RE-CHECKED BY THE MOST SOPHISTICATED *COMPUTERS* AND ANALYZING DEVICES KNOWN TO MAN!

WHEN I AM FINISHED, EVEN *SANTINI* COULD NOT BE SURE WHICH OF US IS THE *IMPOSTOR!*

IT IS ALL SO RELATIVELY *SIMPLE*, WHEN ONE POSSESSES SPECIAL MATERIAL--

--SUCH AS THIS PLASTI-ORGANIC *NOSE*--

--WHICH I FASHIONED FROM MATERIAL OF MY OWN CREATION!

THE *MOUSTACHE* OF COURSE IS MY *OWN*--

AND RELATIVELY *SIMPLE* TO TRIM EXACTLY LIKE THAT OF MY HELPLESS *HOSTAGE!*

SNIP!

FINALLY--

AND NOW--THE JOB IS *DONE!*

THE MOST *DIFFICULT* PART WAS GOING ON A CRASH *DIET*--TO MATCH SANTINI'S *WEIGHT*--

BUT, IT WAS MORE THAN *WORTH* THE EFFORT!

FOR *NO ONE* COULD SUSPECT THAT I AM *NOT* THE REAL *DR. SANTINI!*

ALTHOUGH THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* HAVE MANAGED TO OUT-FIGHT ME IN THE *PAST*--

NOTHING CAN SAVE THEM *NOW!*

AND, AT THAT VERY MOMENT-- IN THE FAMOUS *BAXTER BLDG...*

I *STILL* DON'T SEE WHY I GOTTA GIT ALL DOLLED-UP LIKE A BLASTED *BEAU BUMMEL*--!

THE NAME IS *BEAU BRUMMEL*, BENJAMIN--

AND I'VE TOLD YOU A *DOZEN TIMES* THAT OUR VISITOR IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS *CHEMISTS* ON EARTH!

YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO *GREET* HIM IN THOSE PURPLE *DIAPERS* OF YOURS, WOULD YOU?

AT LEAST THEY SHOW OFF MY MANLY *BUILT!*

EASY WITH THAT COLLAR, BEN! IT COST A SMALL *FORTUNE* TO HAVE THOSE CLOTHES *CUSTOM MADE* FOR YOU!

NUTS! YA SHOULDA *SAVED* YER MONEY, MISTER!

I CAN'T EVEN GIT A *KNOT* IN THIS NUTTY TIE MY *AUNT PETUNIA* SENT ME!

IT'S LIKE TRYIN' TO THREAD A *NEEDLE* WITH A *CATCHER'S MITT!*

DON'T BE *IMPATIENT*, BOYS!

PERHAPS *I* CAN HELP!

THERE, BEN DEAR! YOU LOOK JUST LIKE A BLUE-EYED *FASHION PLATE!*

RATS! I FEEL MORE LIKE A BLUSHIN' BOWL'A ORANGE *JELLO!*

JUST DON'T TAKE A *DEEP BREATH*, BENJAMIN!

HUH? WHAT'SAT YA *SAID*, STRETCH?

NEVER MIND!

FWIK

IT'S JUST NO USE!

THERE'S NO WAY FOR POOR BEN TO ADJUST TO CONDITIONS IN THE NORMAL WORLD!

Y'KNOW SOMETHIN', KIDS--MY LITTLE PURPLE ROMPERS ARE BEGINNIN' TO LOOK AWFUL GOOD TO ME!

ANYWAY, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

WITH MY LOOKS, I OUGHTTA CLIMB INTO A CLOWN SUIT AND LET IT GO AT THAT!

IT WOULDN'T MATTER, BEN DEAR--

ALICIA WOULD STILL BE IN LOVE WITH YOU!

LOOK, OLD FRIEND-- DON'T WORRY ABOUT DR. SANTINI!

HE'S HERE TO HELP YOU --NOT TO CRITICIZE YOUR CLOTHES!

JUST WEAR ANYTHING YOU WANT TO, AND WE'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN HE GETS HERE!

NOW YER TALKIN' MY LANGUAGE, CHARLIE!

A SHORT TIME LATER, IN THE LOBBY BELOW--

I AM DR. SANTINI!

YES SIR! MR. RICHARDS TOLD ME HE WAS EXPECTING YOU!

I'LL SHOW YOU TO THEIR PRIVATE ELEVATOR!

BAXTER BLDG

THE CAR WON'T WORK WITHOUT BEING STARTED BY THIS ELECTRONIC KEY!

IT'S ONE OF MISTER RICHARD'S SPECIAL SAFETY DEVICES!

AH YES! VERY CLEVER!

THIK!

IT'LL TAKE YOU NON-STOP RIGHT TO THEIR PENTHOUSE HEAD-QUARTERS!

HOW CONSIDERATE OF THEM TO MAKE IT SO CONVENIENT FOR ME!

ESPECIALLY SINCE I PLAN TO DESTROY THEM ALL!

SECONDS LATER--

MR. RICHARDS? I AM *DR. SANTINI!* YOU SENT FOR ME--!

COME IN, SIR! I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH I *APPRECIATE* YOUR PROMPT ARRIVAL!

I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY *WIFE*--

CHARMED, I'M SURE!

HOW DO YOU DO, DOCTOR?

AHH, I HAVE HEARD SO MUCH *ABOUT* THIS PLACE!

YOU OCCUPY THE TOP *FIVE FLOORS*, DO YOU NOT?

YES, DR. SANTINI! IT IS OUR COMBINATION *LIVING QUARTERS* AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH COMPLEX!

BUT NOT FOR *LONG*, YOU UNSUSPECTING *FOOLS!*

AND NOW, I'M ANXIOUS FOR YOU TO MEET *BEN GRIMM!*

I'LL HEAT SOME *TEA* WHILE YOU MEN TALK!

AH! THE ONE KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS--THE *THING!*

HE'S RIGHT IN *HERE*--

THIS IS WHERE HE *EXERCISES* AT THIS TIME EACH DAY!

BEN, THIS IS *DR. SANTINI!*

YOU--ARE LIFTING *THAT*--ALL BY *YOURSELF?!!*

IS *THAT* WHAT YOU DO--FOR *EXERCISE??*

NAH! I'M JUST HOLDIN' THIS UP SO'S IT DON'T SCRATCH THE *FLOOR!*

I AWREADY *FINISHED* MY EXERCISE--THAT'S WHY I'M *RESTIN'!*

VERY *AMUSING*, THAT FELLOW!

I FIND YOUR *ELECTRONIC EQUIP-MENT* EXTREMELY FASCINATING, RICHARDS!

DOES THIS PARTICULAR UNIT RUN TO *CENTRAL* BANKS--OR IS IT PROGRAMMED FOR *UNI-CYCLICAL* OPERATION?

YOU SEEM UNUSUALLY *KNOWLEDGEABLE* ABOUT COMPUTERS--FOR A *CHEMIST*, DR. SANTINI!

AS A *SCIENTIST*, I AM KEENLY INTERESTED IN *ALL* PHASES OF HUMAN ENDEAVOR!

AND NOW--SHALL WE GET TO *WORK*?

LEVEL WITH ME, DOC! CAN YA *REALLY* HELP ME?

CAN YA REALLY TURN ME BACK TO THE KINDA GUY I *USEDTA* BE??

SINCE BEING CONTACTED BY REED RICHARDS, I HAVE *STUDIED* THE PROBLEM!

I THINK I MAY *PROMISE* YOU--YOU WILL BE--*CHANGED!*

MISTER--IF YOU AINT PUTTIN' ME *ON*--IF YA REALLY *MEAN* IT--!!

I--DUNNO WHAT--TO *SAY!*

SEE THIS USED-UP IRON *DOO-HICKEY* HERE? IT WEIGHS MORE'N 300 POUNDS!

NOW JUST *WATCH*--

I CAN *CRUSH* IT LIKE AN *EGG SHELL!*

--I CAN HOLD BACK A CHARGIN' *TANK*--'N PLOW THRU A SOLID STEEL *WALL*--!

BUT, I WOULDN'T CARE IF I WUZ THE *WEAKEST* JOE ON EARTH--IF I COULD JUST BE--*HUMAN*--ONCE MORE!

I UNDERSTAND YOUR *PROBLEM*, BEN GRIMM! AND I SAY ONCE *AGAIN*--

WHEN I AM *DONE*--YOU WILL BE A *DIFFERENT MAN!*

BUT NOT THE WAY YOU *EXPECT*, YOU BRAINLESS, BESTIAL *CLOD!*

THEN, AS THE LONG, SUSPENSEFUL HOURS DRAG ON--

I'LL HAVE THE *MOLECU-BOARD* OPERATIONAL FOR YOU BEFORE LONG, *SANTINI!*

THE COMPONENT *PARTS* HAVE JUST ARRIVED!

EXCELLENT! *EXCELLENT!* THIS WILL BE ONE OF MY GREATEST SCIENTIFIC *TRIUMPHS!*

WAIT A MINUTE, DOCTOR!! SOMETHING'S *WRONG!!*

THERE'S AN EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF *RADIATION* EMANATING FROM THAT CHEMICAL MIXTURE!!

NONSENSE!! I PERSONALLY *CHECKED* IT--JUST *MINUTES* AGO!

THEN YOU CHECKED IT *WRONG!!*

LOOK AT THOSE *DIALS*, MAN!! THERE CAN'T BE ANY *DOUBT!!*

SKLAAK!

IF I HADN'T COME IN WHEN I *DID*--TO COMPENSATE FOR THE *SEEPAGE*--THERE'S NO TELLING *WHAT* MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED!!

I NEVER EXPECTED SUCH *CARELESSNESS* --IN A MAN OF YOUR REPUTATION, DOCTOR!!

*MEANWHILE, TOO NERVOUS, TOO TENSE TO REMAIN AT THE BAXTER BUILDING WHILE THE VITAL *PREPARATIONS* ARE BEING MADE, THE BROODING *THING* WALKS AIMLESSLY THRU THE CANYONS OF THE GREAT, SPRAWLING CITY--*

THE ONLY THING I *REGRET*--IN CASE THE EXPERIMENT *WORKS*--IT'LL MEAN THE FF WON'T *NEED* ME ANY MORE!!

WITHOUT MY *POWER*--I'LL JUST BE ANOTHER GUY NAMED BEN!

REED *KNOWS* HE'LL LOSE HIS *STRONGEST* PARD--BUT HE'S *STILL* TRYIN' TO HELP ME!

THAT EGGHEAD'S THE GREATEST *PAL* A GUY EVER *HAD!*

SO WRAPPED UP IN HIS OWN SOMBER THOUGHTS IS BEN GRIMM, THAT HE FAILS TO NOTICE THE *STREET* TO WHICH HIS PONDEROUS PERAMBULATION HAS TAKEN HIM--!

IT'S *HIM!!*--WALKIN' IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD *ALONE*-- LIKE HE *OWNED* THE PLACE!!

GO *ON*--*PELT* 'IM ONE-- TO GET HIM *MAD*--

LEAVE IT TO *ME!* --I'LL GET 'IM!

WE GOTTA MAKE SURE HE DON'T GET *AWAY* TILL WE CAN ROUND UP THE *REST* OF THE GANG!!

I'M ALWAYS *YELLIN'* AT OL' STRETCHO --AND *TORCHY*, TOO!

BUT SOME DAY--I GOTTA TELL 'EM-- HOW I *REALLY* FEEL ABOUT 'EM--

YANCY ST.

PUBLIC SHELTER

--IF A BIG APE LIKE *ME* CAN EVER FIND THE *WORDS!*

SOMEHOW-- BEIN' WITH *THEM*--I NEVER FELT SO MUCH LIKE--THE *MONSTER*-- I KNOW I REALLY *AM*--!

FTHAPP!

AND *ALICIA*--! ALL THESE YEARS-- SHE HELPED TO KEEP ME FROM-- DROPPIN' OUT--!

I DON'T *GET* IT! HE'S PICKIN' IT UP SLOW 'N EASY--LIKE NOTHIN' *HAPPENED!!*

ALICIA! THE SWEETEST KID WHO EVER LIVED!

IF WE CAN'T GET 'IM *MAD* AT US ANY MORE--THE *YANCY STREET GANG* MIGHT AS WELL GO OUTTA *BUSINESS!*

HE'S WALKIN' *AWAY*--LEAVIN' THE *NEIGHBORHOOD!*

HE DIDN'T EVEN GIVE US THE CHANCE TO MAKE A *MONKEY* OUTTA HIM AGAIN!

I BETTER GIT *BACK* NOW!

THEY MAY BE *READY* FOR ME!

HE CAN'T *DO* THIS!! WE AINT GONNA TAKE IT LYIN' *DOWN!*

HE'S SULLYIN' THE FAIR NAME OF *YANCY STREET!!*

AND, AS THE FRUSTRATED *YANCY STREETERS* GIVE VENT TO THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT...

FROM NOW ON, I'LL *DOUBLE-CHECK* EVERY STEP WE TAKE, DOCTOR!

SUIT YOURSELF, RICHARDS--IF YOU FEEL IT'S *NECESSARY!*

THERE'S SOMETHING *ABOUT* SANTINI--THAT MAKES ME *MISTRUST* HIM!

I KNOW THAT *ANYONE* CAN MAKE A MISTAKE, SANTINI, BUT REMEMBER--A HUMAN *LIFE* IS INVOLVED HERE--THE LIFE OF MY *BEST FRIEND!*

BUT, I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING TO *REED*--A WOMAN'S *INTUITION* IS HARDLY CONCRETE *EVIDENCE!*

I NEED NO FURTHER REMINDERS!

THE EXPERIMENT WILL *SUCCEED*--EXACTLY AS I *PLANNED* IT!

I WAS *CARELESS* BEFORE--BUT LUCKILY, HE IS TOO ANXIOUS TO HELP THE *THING* FOR HIM TO CALL A *HALT* NOW!

AND SOON--IT WILL BE *TOO LATE*--FOR *ANY* OF THEM!

THEN, SUDDENLY--

RRAK!

BEN!!

IS EVERYTHING ALL *SET??* IS SANTINI *READY* FER ME??

YOU'RE JUST IN *TIME!* THEY'VE BEEN *WAITING* FOR YOUR RETURN!

HEY! WHAT AM I DOIN' WITH A BLASTED *DOOR* IN MY--*=UH OH!=*

I GUESS--I DID IT *AGAIN* --HUH?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, OLD FRIEND!

THERE'S A *JOB* TO BE DONE!!

WELL?? LET'S GIT *STARTED!!*

I CAN'T WAIT TO LOOK IN THE *MIRROR*, 'N SEE *ROCK HUDSON* GRINNIN' BACK AT ME!

SUE--YOU'LL HAVE TO *LEAVE*, DEAR! THE RADIATION COULD BE *DANGEROUS!*

LET'S GO, SANTINI!

OKAY, BEN-- INTO THE TANK!

AINTCHA GONNA MAKE ANY CORN-BALL LAST-MINUTE SPEECHES LIKE YA ALWAYS DO--??

NOT THIS TIME, MISTER! EVERY SECOND COUNTS! NOW MOVE!

SPEED IT UP, RICHARDS!

THIS MIXTURE WILL LOSE ITS POTENCY WITHIN SECONDS!

THE FASTER HE WORKS, THE LESS CHANCE OF HIM SUSPECTING HOW I'VE CHANGED THE FORMULA!

UNHHHHH!

BIG DEAL! ALL THAT WORK --JUST FER--A CRAZY--RADIO-ACTIVE-- BUBBLE BATH!!

THEY SHOULDA TOLD ME--TO BRING--MY LITTLE CAKE OF MICKEY MOUSE SOAP--!!

OKAY, BEN--THAT'S ENOUGH! GET OUT! --DON'T DAWDLE, MAN!! I SAID OUT!

STAND STILL!! DON'T MOVE! --NOT A MUSCLE, HEAR?

I'VE GOT TO BOMBARD YOUR ENTIRE FRAME WITH A LIGHT TOUCH OF THESE MESA RAYS!

THEN, SECONDS LATER--

YER NOT DONE YET??

THIS IS THE FINAL STAGE, OLD FRIEND!

STEP OVER TO THE MOLECU-BOARD! THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL BE SHOWERED WITH HEAVY MESA RAYS-- POWERFUL ENOUGH TO BRING ABOUT THE CHANGE!

WADDAYA *STRAPPIN'* ME DOWN FOR??

I'M A *BIG BOY* NOW! I AINT GONNA COMPLAIN ABOUT A LITTLE *PAIN!*

THAT'S NOT THE REASON, BEN! THE PROCESS IS RELATIVELY *Ppainless!*

--BUT YOU MUST BE HELD *MOTION-LESS* SO THE RAYS ARE DISTRIB-UTED *EVENLY* UPON YOUR BODY!

ALL SET, SANTINI?

I'M FAR MORE *SET* THAN YOU COULD EVER *IMAGINE,* YOU UNSUSPECTING *FOOL!*-- *THIS* IS WHERE I ACHIEVE MY OBJECTIVE!

STAND ASIDE, RICHARDS! ONCE I MAKE THIS FINAL ADJUSTMENT, THE RAYS WILL BE *FIRED!*

ADJUSTMENT??!! WHAT ADJUSTMENT?? *STOP!!* LET ME *CHECK* IT.!!

I SAID *HOLD IT!!* DON'T TOUCH THOSE *CONTROLS!!*

IT'S *TOO LATE!* *NOTHING* CAN STOP THE PROCESS *NOW!*

BEN!

HAZAM!

IT'S *OVER!* NOW THERE'S *NOTHING MORE* THAT WE CAN DO!

IT'S *OVER*, HUH?

THEN HOW COME I DIDN'T *CHANGE*? I'M STILL THE *SAME*--!!

I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT *EXPRESSION* ON BEN BEFORE!! SHEER *SAVAGERY* --AN AIR OF COMPLETE *MERCILESSNESS*-- TOTAL *HATRED*--!!

YA MADE A *FOOL* OF ME, MISTER!!

YA *KNEW* IT WOULDN'T WORK!!--YA KNEW IT ALL THE *TIME*!!

FER ALL I KNOW-- YA TRIED TO *KILL* ME--BUT YA *FAILED*!

NO! YOU CAN'T *BELIEVE* THAT!! *BEN*-- *STOP*!! WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*--?!!

I'M GONNA MAKE *SURE*-- THAT YA'LL NEVER *LAUGH* AT ME-- AGAIN--!!

IT-IT'S *CLEAR* TO ME NOW!! YOU *DID* CHANGE!!

BUT--IT WASN'T --A *PHYSICAL* CHANGE!

SOMETHING WENT *WRONG*!! YOUR *BODY'S* THE *SAME*-- BUT--YOUR *MIND* WAS AFFECTED--!!

AND NOW--HE'S COMING TO *KILL* YOU--!

JUST AS I *PLANNED*!! THE *THING* WILL ACCOMPLISH MY MISSION--HE WILL *DESTROY* THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

NEXT --BY BEN BETRAYED!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

MARVEL™ COMICS GROUP

12¢ IND. | 69 DEC

MCG

"BY BEN BETRAYED!"

THE FABULOUS F.F. FACE THEIR MOST DEADLY CRISIS...

"BY BEN BETRAYED!"

TREASURE THIS INTRO, FRANTIC ONE--IT'S ONE OF THE *LONGEST* WE'VE EVER ASKED YOU TO PLOW THRU--!

THOUGH HE *LOOKS* LIKE THE FAMOUS *DR. SANTINI*, THE WORLD'S FOREMOST *CHEMIST*, THIS GLOATING FIEND IS ACTUALLY OUR DISGUISED *MYSTERY VILLAIN!*

HE'S MANAGED TO AFFECT BEN'S *BRAIN*-- CHEMICALLY-- SO THAT THE NOW HATE-FILLED *THING* IS BENT UPON *DESTROYING* THE F.F.--!

YOU TRIED TO MAKE A *FOOL* OF ME, RICHARDS!

YOU SAID YOU'D CHANGE ME BACK TO *BEN GRIMM*-- BUT *LOOK* AT ME!

NOW I *KNOW!* YOU *NEVER* WANTED TO HELP ME!

YOU *HATE* ME! YOU *ALWAYS* HATED ME!

THAT'S WHY--YOU TRIED TO *KILL* ME!

BUT I'M GONNA MAKE *SURE*-- YOU NEVER GET A CHANCE *AGAIN!*

IF *THIS* DOESN'T HIT YA WHERE YOU LIVE, WE JUST PLAIN *GIVE UP!* BUT, IF IT *DOES*--

WHAT ARE WE *WAITING* FOR--??

WHY ARE STAN (THE MAN) LEE and JACK (KING) KIRBY THE MOST HONORED CREATIVE TEAM IN ALL OF COMICDOM?

THIS MARVEL MASTERWORK WILL GIVE YOU A FEW CLUES!

DAZZLING DELINEATION
JOE SINNOTT
LUSTROUS LETTERING
ARTIE SIMEK

I'VE *DONE* IT! I'VE FINALLY MADE THE BLUDGEONING *THING* AS TRULY *EVIL*--AS UNCONQUERABLY *DANGEROUS* AS HE *LOOKS!*

AT *LAST* I KNOW WHO MY *REAL* ENEMIES ARE!

WHEN I'M *DONE* WITH YA-- THE *FANTASTIC FOUR'LL* BE *DEAD*--!

AND THEN-- MEBBE *BEN GRIMM* CAN BEGIN TO *LIVE* AGAIN!

NO, BEN! *STOP!*

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *SAYING*--WHAT YOU'RE *DOING!*

BEN! STAY BACK!

SAVE YER *BREATH*, MISTER!

MY DAYS OF *LISTENIN'* TO YA ARE *OVER!*

HE'S-- COMPLETELY OUT OF-- *CONTROL*--!

IT DON'T MATTER *HOW* MUCH YA STRETCH 'N DODGE ME, RICHARDS!

I'LL NAIL YA *SOONER* OR LATER--AND *ONE SHOT* AT YA IS ALL IT'LL *TAKE!*

HE'S *RIGHT!* I NEED A *WEAPON*-- AND I NEED IT *FAST!*

MY *HI-VOLTAGE DISCHARGER*-- BEHIND HIM! IT'S GOT THE KICK OF A *MULE!*

IT COULD *KILL* A NORMAL MAN--

OH NO, RICHARDS! THAT TWO-BIT TOY AINT STOPPIN' *ME!*

BUT WITH *BEN'S* MASSIVE STRENGTH --IT WON'T DO MORE THAN *STUN* HIM!

I-- WOULDN'T HAVE-- *BELIEVED* IT!

HE'S SO COMPLETELY-- SO *UTTERLY* CONSUMED WITH BESTIAL *HATRED*-- THAT HE DOESN'T EVEN *FEEL* THE FORCE THAT'S *STRIKING* HIM!

YA WON'T ESCAPE ME *NOW!*

THE DISCHARGER! BEN--DON'T--IN YOUR HANDS, IT COULD--! BEN!!

GIMME THAT!! IF ANYONE'S GONNA USE IT--IT'LL BE ME!

I WARNED YA I WAS PLAYIN' FER KEEPS THIS TIME!

CAN'T FIGHT HIM ANY LONGER--WITHOUT WARNING THE OTHERS! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!

IF I SHOULD FALL--HE MIGHT ATTACK THEM--WITHOUT WARNING!

SUE! IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN--WHERE ARE YOU?

REED! WHAT IS IT?? WHAT HAPPENED??

IT'S BEN! HE'S GONE MAD! SANTINI CHANGED HIM SOMEHOW! YOU'VE GOT TO RUN--GET AWAY--!

NOT A CHANCE! IT'S TOO LATE--FER ANY OF YA!

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DARLING!!

HE INTENDS TO--DESTROY US!!

HE HAS YOUR HI-VOLTAGE DISCHARGER!!

I CAN'T RUN AWAY--NOT WHILE THE DANGER IS SO GREAT!--I CAN'T!

DON'T WORRY, LADY!! THE DANGER'LL BE FINISHED BEFORE YA KNOW IT!

'N SO WILL YOU!

SO! YA TOSSED UP YER INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD, HUH?

A FAT LOTTA GOOD THAT'S GONNA DO YA!

AT THAT MOMENT, JOHNNY STORM AND CRYSTAL RETURN TO THE BAXTER BUILDING, ONLY TO HEAR--

LISTEN! THE SOUND OF REED'S PORTABLE DISCHARGER! SOMETHING'S WRONG!

STAY BACK HERE, HONEY! I'D BETTER GO AND CHECK IT OUT!

BUT WHY CAN'T I GO WITH YOU?

NOT TILL I KNOW MORE ABOUT IT!

SECONDS LATER, JUST AS JOHNNY ENTERS THE LAB CORRIDOR--

ZAP!

THAT BOLT ALMOST HIT ME!

WHATEVER'S GOING ON IN THERE, I'M SURE OF ONE THING--IT'S FOR REAL!

FLAME ON!

THERE'S THE DISCHARGER--RIGHT AHEAD OF ME!

CAN'T YET SEE WHO'S HOLDING IT FROM HERE--

BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER! ONE FIRE BLAST WILL TAKE CARE OF IT!

FLASH!

THE TORCH! HE BLEW IT UP!

BEN! IT WAS YOU!!--BUT, I DON'T GET IT!

WHY WERE YOU FIRING REED'S DISCHARGER?!?!

YA DON'T THINK THAT CORNY WALL OF FLAME IS GONNA STOP ME FER LONG!

I'LL WRITE'CHA A BOOK!

SUE! WHAT'S WRONG?? WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO BEN?

HEY! THAT'S REED! HE'S HURT!! WHO DID IT?

IT WAS BEN!

NO TIME TO EXPLAIN NOW, JOHNNY!

WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM TO SAFETY!

HURRY--BEFORE BEN FINDS A WAY TO GET THRU THOSE FLAMES!

THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, SIS! WHY WOULD BEN TURN AGAINST US??

ACCORDING TO REED, IT'S NOT HIS FAULT! HE DOESN'T REALIZE WHAT HE'S DOING!

KEEP RUNNING --PLEASE!

I DON'T LIKE IT! SUE SOUNDS REALLY SCARED!

REED'S GETTING BACK TO NORMAL NOW!

EASY, DARLING! DON'T STRAIN YOURSELF! YOU'VE GOT TO REST!

REST?!! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING! YOU DON'T REALIZE THE DANGER!!

JOHNNY! IS THERE-- SOMETHING-- I CAN DO??

I DON'T KNOW, CRYS!

I DON'T DIG ANY OF THIS! IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! BEN'S OUR PAL!

DO I HAVE TO SPELL IT OUT??

OF COURSE BEN'S OUR PAL! BUT-- THAT'S NOT BEN!!

SOMETHING'S CHANGED HIM-- TURNED HIM INTO A DESTRUCTIVE, UNREASONING MONSTER!

NOW ALL OF YOU--GET OUT OF HERE! I'VE GOT TO FACE HIM ALONE!

THE RESPONSIBILITY IS MINE!

AT LEAST-- HE'S LOST THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE BY NOW!

AND, ON THE *OTHER* SIDE OF THE NOW-FLICKERING WALL OF *FLAME*--

WHAT ARE YOU *WAITING* FOR??

SURELY THAT LITTLE BIT OF DYING *FIRE* CAN'T STOP YOU!

WHAT'S THE *RUSH*, SANTINI? I CAN *GIT* 'EM ANY TIME I *WANNA*!

LET 'EM KNOCK THEMSELVES *OUT*--WONDERIN' WHEN I'LL TEAR *INTA* THEM!

YOU *FOOL*! TIME IS ON *THEIR* SIDE!

RICHARDS HAS ALL HIS *EQUIPMENT* TO WORK WITH! YOU MUSTN'T LET HIM CONSTRUCT A NEW *WEAPON*!

YEAH! I NEVER *THOUGHT* OF THAT!

OKAY, RICHARDS--PLAYTIME'S *OVER*! THIS IS *IT*, RAT!

THAT'S *IT*! THEY'RE JUST *AHEAD* OF YOU!

FINISH RICHARDS *FIRST*--AND THEN THE *OTHERS*!

AS FOR *ME*, I'VE JUST MADE THE GREATEST *FIND* OF ALL!

THE RAMPAGING FOOL JUST BROKE DOWN THE DOOR TO THEIR *FILE ROOM*!

EVERYTHING HAS HAPPENED JUST AS I *PREDICTED* IT WOULD!

NOT ONLY WILL I SUCCEED IN FINALLY *WIPING OUT* THE ACCURSED FANTASTIC FOUR--

BUT ALL OF RICHARDS' GREATEST *SECRETS* AND *FORMULAE* WILL BE *MINE*!

NEVER HAS ANYONE WON SO *GREAT*--SO TRULY *MONUMENTAL* A VICTORY!!

EVERYTHING I'VE EVER DREAMED OF ACCOMPLISHING--IS *HERE*--IN THESE PRICELESS *PAPERS*!

AND NOW, THE TIME FOR *SUBTERFUGE* AND DISGUISE IS *ENDED*!

ONE BLAST OF MY SPECIAL **DISSOLVEX GAS** WILL OBLITERATE ALL MY PLASTIC **MAKE-UP**--AS WELL AS MY HASTILY-GROWN **MOUSTACHE**--

NEVER **AGAIN** WILL MEN CALL ME THE **MAD THINKER!**

FROM THIS MOMENT ON, I WILL BE **IMMORTALIZED** AS THE **ALL-POWERFUL THINKER**--

THE ONLY GENIUS ABLE TO COMPLETELY **WIPE OUT** THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

TO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAD ALREADY **GUESSED** THAT THE BOGUS SANTINI IS REALLY THE **MAD THINKER**, OUR SINCEREST **CONGRATULATIONS!** TO ALL OTHERS, DON'T REPROACH YOURSELVES--EVEN HONEST IRVING WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE! AND NOW, BACK TO THE TINTINNABULATIN' TUMULT...

I **CAN'T** GO, MY DARLING! I I CAN'T LEAVE YOU TO FACE BEN **ALONE**--!

YOU **MUST**, SUE! I CAN'T LET YOU PLACE YOURSELF IN JEOPARDY --LEAST OF ALL **NOW!**

AS SOON AS I GET 'EM TO THE **PRECINCT HOUSE**, I'LL BE **BACK**, REED!

YOU'VE GOTTA **HANG ON** TILL THEN-- NO MATTER **WHAT!**

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS FOR THE **BEST** JOHNNY?

JOHNNY WILL TAKE BOTH YOU AND CRYSTAL TO **SAFETY!**

LET'S **GO**, SIS!! EVERY SECOND **COUNTS!**

IT'S **REED'S ORDERS**--AND THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR **ME**, CRYS!

THEY'RE **SAFE**-- AT **LAST!**

NOW I CAN FACE THE **THING**--WITH NO **DISTRACTIONS**-- NO **INTERFERENCE!**

BE **CAREFUL**, REED! BE CAREFUL-- MY DEAREST--!

SHOOO

KRAK!

BEN!

AWRIGHT, YOU ROTTEN CREEP! I'M THRU PLAYIN' AROUND! THIS IS IT!

HE MEANS IT!

MY ONLY CHANCE--IS TO SIDE-STEP--AT THE VERY LAST SPLIT-SECOND!

IT WORKED!

HE COULDN'T STOP HIMSELF IN TIME!

HE'S HURTLING DOWN--TO HIS DEATH--AMONG THE ROOFTOPS BELOW!

BUT I CAN'T LET IT HAPPEN!

HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING! I CAN'T LET MY BEST FRIEND PERISH THAT WAY!

GOT HIM!

BUT THE SUDDEN *JOLT* IS TOO MUCH FOR *MR. FANTASTIC* WHO IS SO PRECARIOUSLY BALANCED AT THE LIP OF THE LEDGE--

I MANAGED TO BREAK HIS *FALL*--BUT--

CAN'T HOLD *ON!* I'M-- GOING *OVER*--!

HE SLOWED ME DOWN *ENUFF* TO LET ME CATCH ONTO ONE'A THESE *GIRDERS!*

SO NOW I GOT ME A PERFECT *SPOT* TO WATCH RICHARDS WHEN HE FINALLY *HITS!*

BLAST IT!! I FORGOT!

HE CAN *FLATTEN OUT* THAT CRUMMY *BODY* OF HIS SO'S HE CAN *GLIDE* ALONG THE *AIR CURRENTS!*

BUT THAT AINT SAVIN' HIM FROM *ME!*

SKRUNCH

MOVE IT, YOU CREEPS!

THE *THING'S* GONNA TAKE A *RIDE* FER HIMSELF!

THERE AINT *NO* PLACE HE CAN FLOAT TO THAT I CAN'T *REACH* BEFORE HE GITS AWAY!

BUT, WHAT OF THE SINISTER SUPER-FIEND WHO *STARTED* IT ALL--??

SO FAR, EVERYTHING IS PROGRESSING ENTIRELY ACCORDING TO *PLAN!*

MY COMPUTERS PREDICTED I WOULD SNAP *PICTURES* OF RICHARDS' MOST TREASURED SECRETS AT THIS VERY *MOMENT!*

HIS *SOLAR-ENERGY ACTIVATOR* ALONE IS WORTH ALL THAT I'VE RISKED!

AND RICHARDS' *COMPUTERS!* I NEVER DREAMED THAT *ANYONE* COULD CREATE VARIATIONS WHICH EVEN *I* HAD NEVER THOUGHT OF!

MY *OWN* COMPUTERS *PREDICTED* THAT I'D FIND THE MOST AWE-SOME DISCOVERY OF *ALL* AT THIS SPLIT-SECOND!

THIS MUST BE IT--BEHIND THE STEEL *DOOR!*

BUT--WHY SO *STRONG* A DOOR?? WHY THE WORD *DANGER??*

NEGATIVE ZONE COMPLEX

DANGER!

WHAT DOES IT *MEAN??* WHAT --HAVE I-- STUMBLED *INTO--??!*

AND THE *SAME* GOES FOR THE DESPERATE *MISTER FANTASTIC--*

THE *AIR CURRENTS* ARE FAR TOO *STRONG*--CAN'T CHANGE *DIRECTION* IN TIME!

I'M BEING BLOWN--HELPLESSLY--STRAIGHT TOWARDS THAT SHARP-POINTED *SPIRE--!*

BUT, BEFORE THE FANTASTIC ADVENTURER CAN *STRIKE* THE DEADLY STEEPLE...

A BLAZING *FIREBALL*-- MELTED IT INTO *NOTHING-NESS!*

LOOKS LIKE I MADE IT *BACK* JUST IN *TIME!*

YOU *KNOW* IT, BROTHER-IN-LAW!

COVER ME, JOHNNY-- AS I HEAD FOR THE *RIVER!*

LOOKS LIKE HE'S TRYIN' FOR A LANDIN' IN THE *WATER!*

WELL, IT AINT GONNA BE AS EASY AS HE *THINKS*-- NOT IF *I* CAN HELP IT!

HE'S STARTIN' TO GLIDE *LOWER!*

AN' THAT MAKES IT JUST *PERFECT* FER ME!

ALL I GOTTA *DO* IS REACH THAT OLD, EMPTY, TEN-STORY *TOWER* JUST AHEAD!

THUMP!

IT'S GONNA BE TORN DOWN *ANYWAY*-- TA MAKE ROOM FER THE NEW *EXPRESS-WAY*--

AN' SINCE I'M A REAL, BIG-HEARTED, PUBLIC-SPIRITED *CITIZEN*--

NO PARKING

I'LL JUST KIND'A *SPEED UP* THE JOB A LITTLE!

FOOM!

OH NO! REED'S GONNA HIT THAT TOTTERING BUILDING!

IT'S OKAY, LAD! DON'T WORRY! I CAN HANDLE IT!

BEN OUT-SMARTED HIMSELF THIS TIME!

HE'S JUST GIVEN ME SOMETHING TO HOLD ONTO --WHILE I GET MY BREATH BACK!

OKAY, LEADER-MAN! I'LL SEE TO IT THAT HE DOESN'T SLAM IT AGAIN!

ARE YOU SURE YOU'LL BE OKAY HERE--?

DON'T BE A WORRY-WART, KID! STOP THE THING!

BUT TRY NOT TO INJURE HIM!

REED DIDN'T HAVE TO TELL ME THAT!

I'VE LOST COUNT OF HOW MANY TIMES OL' BENJY HAS SAVED MY LIFE!

BUT I'VE STILL GOTTA STOP 'IM SOME-HOW!

YOU AGIN!!

HIT

I AINT GOT TIME TO WASTE ON KIDS!! NOT YET, ANYWAY!!

SHE'S

TRY AGAIN, BIG MAN!

I CAN FLY *RINGS* AROUND *ANY* GUSHER OF WATER FROM *ANY* HYDRANT!

IT MISSED ME BY A *MILE!*

YEAH-- I *KNOW* IT DID!

BUT *THIS* WON'T--!

SPOOM

NEXT TIME DON'T *FERGET* HOW I CAN MAKE A *VACUUM-BLAST* JUST BY CLAPPIN' MY *MITTS!*

HAH! WITHOUT YER *FLAME*-- YER *NOTHIN'!*

I CAN POLISH YA *OFF* ANY TIME I WANNA!

BUT IF I WASTE ANY MORE TIME WITH *YOU* NOW, THAT CREEP *RICHARDS* IS LIABLE TA SLIP AWAY!

AN' *HE'S* THE ONE I'M *REALLY* AFTER!

HE'S THE ONE WHO TURNED ME INTO-- THE *THING*--THE ONE WHO MADE ME A *MONSTER!!*

AN' HE'S GOTTA *PAY* FER IT-- WITH HIS *LIFE!*

WHILE, IN A BUSY POLICE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, DIRECTLY ACROSS TOWN, WE FIND--

WE'RE DOING EVERY-THING WE CAN, MRS. RICHARDS!

EVERY AVAILABLE MAN IS BEING RUSHED TO THE SCENE RIGHT NOW!

ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE HEARD NOTHING?? NO WORD AT ALL?

HERE'S THE SCRAMBLE ORDER TO ZONE D! WE'RE TAKING NO CHANCES!

MOVE IT, MAN!

THIS IS IT, YOU GUYS!

THEY'VE JUST BEEN SIGHTED IN THE MURRAY HILL SECTION!

WE'RE GONNA THROW EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT INTO THE AREA!

IF THERE'S ANY WAY TO HELP REED RICHARDS, WE'LL FIND IT, LADY!

IF ONLY--WE COULD BE SURE--THE THING WON'T BE HARMED, AS WELL!

LOOK, MRS. RICHARDS!! YOU CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS!

THAT NOISE OVERHEAD!! THE SOUND OF ENGINES-- JET PLANES--!

THAT ORANGE-SKINNED POWER-HOUSE ISN'T GONNA BE STOPPED BY A PAT ON THE WRIST!

I TOLD YOU WE WERE PULLIN' ALL THE STOPS! WE CAN'T LET SOMEONE AS STRONG AS THE THING RUN RIOT IN THIS TOWN!

JETS!! THEY MUST BE COMIN' FER ME!

NUTS! IT'LL TAKE A LOT MORE'N THAT TO KEEP ME FROM GITTIN' MY HANDS ON RICHARDS!!

'N AFTER I DO-- I DON'T GIVE A HANG WHAT HAPPENS!

THEY'RE SHOOTIN' *ABOVE* ME--

TRYIN' TO SCARE ME *OFF!*

BUT IT AINT GONNA *WORK!*

GO ON--DO YER *WORST!!*

NOTHIN'S GONNA SAVE RICHARDS FROM ME-- *NOTHIN!!!*

BEN DOESN'T REALIZE THE *DANGER* TO HIMSELF!!

THEIR *FIRST* PASS WAS JUST A *WARNING*--

BUT THEY'LL COME IN FOR THE *KILL* NEXT TIME AROUND!!

I'VE GOT TO *HOLD THEM OFF!*

IT'S NOT *BEN'S* FAULT HE TURNED *BAD*--!

I NEED A CHANCE TO *SETTLE* THIS--MY *OWN* WAY-- WITHOUT *HURTING* HIM!

--IF I CAN KEEP HIM FROM *KILLING* ME WHILE I *DO* IT!

BEN, *LISTEN* TO ME! YOU HAVEN'T A *CHANCE* AGAINST THOSE PLANES!!

WHATEVER YOU *THINK* ABOUT ME--YOU'RE *WRONG*! SANTINI HAS AFFECTED YOUR *BRAIN*!

I CAN *PROVE* IT--IF YOU'LL JUST GIVE ME A *CHANCE*!!

OH *NO* YA DON'T!!

YOU AINT *TALKIN'* YER WAY OUTTA *THIS* ONE, MISTER!

SANTINI TRIED TA *HELP* ME!

YOU'RE THE ONLY *ENEMY* I GOT--!

BUT I'M *WISE* TO YA NOW!

YOU AINT NEVER GONNA STOP ME FROM BECOMIN' *BEN GRIMM* AGAIN!!

IT'S *HOPELESS*!! HE'S BEYOND ALL *REASON*!

HE'S *DETERMINED* TO KILL ME!

THIS IS *IT*, RICHARDS! THAT *CHOPPER* AINT GONNA BE ABLE TA SAVE YA *NOW*!

I SHOULDA DONE THIS A *LONG TIME* AGO, WHEN--*HEY*!!

I DON'T *GET* IT!! WHERE'D HE *GO*?!!

HE AINT *HERE* NO MORE!! 'N THE *CHOPPER'S* GONE, TOO!

I SHOULDA *GUESSED*!! SUE TURNED 'EM *INVISIBLE*!!

THEN, ONCE THE SHIP IS SAFELY OUT OF RANGE--

QUICK! CONTACT THE *JETS*!

HAVE THEM *RETURN TO BASE*!!

THE *THING* MUST *NOT* BE HARMED!

I'LL ASSUME *ALL* RESPONSIBILITY!

THE ORDER'S BEEN *GIVEN*, SIR!

YOU WERE *WONDERFUL*, SUE! YOU *SAVED* ME --WITHOUT HARMING BEN!

BUT--HOW LONG CAN WE *PROTECT* HIM, DARLING?? WHAT WILL *BECOME* OF HIM?

MAY HEAVEN *HELP* US-- I--*DON'T*-- *KNOW*!!

AND, IN *ANOTHER* PART OF THE CITY, THE *REAL* DR. SANTINI FINALLY RECOVERS CONSCIOUSNESS ONCE MORE--

I'M STILL A *PRISONER*! STILL TRAPPED WITHIN THIS STRANGE *STEEL CELL*!

BUT *WHY*?? BY *WHOM*?? FOR WHAT UNGODLY *PURPOSE*??!

OVER *THERE*-- A *FIGURE*-- BEHIND THAT PLEXIGLASS *WINDOW*!!

IF I CAN JUST *SIGNAL* HIM--ATTRACT HIS *ATTENTION*--!! PERHAPS HE CAN *HELP* ME--!!

IT'S *NO USE*!! HE DOESN'T *MOVE*!! HE SEEMS AS *LIFELESS* AS A *STATUE*!

IN FACT--HIS *HEAD*-- WHAT I CAN *SEE* OF IT--ISN'T *HUMAN*!!

HE'S--AN *ANDROID* OF SOME SORT--!!

BUT WHO *CONTROLS* HIM?? WHO'S *BEHIND* IT ALL??

AND, IN ANSWER TO SANTINI'S DESPERATE QUESTION, WE RETURN TO THE *MAD THINKER*, AS HE BEHOLDS AN AWESOME SIGHT--

SO,!! RICHARDS HAS FOUND THE ENTRANCE TO *SUB-SPACE*--

HE'S DISCOVERED THE DREADED *NEGATIVE ZONE* ITSELF!!

THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!!* THE *ONE* THING MY *COMPUTERS* COULD NOT PREDICT--THE ONE *EXTRA* FACTOR!!

BUT, EVERYTHING *ELSE* HAS GONE ACCORDING TO MY *COMPUTATIONS!*

THERE WAS A 99.68% POSSIBILITY THAT THE *THING* HAS FINISHED *REED RICHARDS* BY NOW!

AND YET--I MUST NOT *DISCOUNT* THE .32% POSSIBILITY OF AN *UPSET!*

IF RICHARDS *SURVIVED*, HE IS CERTAIN TO GUESS MY *REAL* IDENTITY!

IN WHICH CASE, IT WON'T TAKE HIM LONG TO FIND WHERE I'VE IMPRISONED *SANTINI!*

THAT MEANS I'VE GOT TO *RETURN* AS SOON AS POSSIBLE--AND DISPOSE OF THE LIVING *EVIDENCE!*

THE NEGATIVE ZONE WILL HAVE TO *WAIT*--

--UNTIL I'VE MADE CERTAIN TO COVER ALL MY *TRACKS!*

AND NOW, BACK TO OUR HARRASSED HEROES--

WE LEARNED YOU HAD BROUGHT THE *TORCH* HERE!

CAN WE *SEE* HIM?? IS HE *ALL RIGHT?*

SURE, RICHARDS! WE MANAGED TO REACH HIM IN PLENTY OF *TIME!*

THE BOY IS *FINE!*

HE'S *WAITING* FOR YOU-- RIGHT INSIDE--!

JOHNNY! THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE NOT *HURT!* WE WERE SO *WORRIED!*

NUTS! I WAS *SOME* GREAT HELP!

NO! DON'T *SAY* THAT!

HOW COULD *YOU* KNOW THAT BEN WAS OUT TO *DESTROY* US??

YOU'D HAVE DONE BETTER *WITHOUT* ME!

I *STILL* CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT!

WHERE DO WE GO FROM *HERE*, REED?

I'VE BEEN WRACKING MY BRAIN--AND I THINK I'VE FOUND THE *KEY!*

SANTINI IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS! BUT, THE *REAL* SANTINI WOULD HAVE NO *MOTIVE!* HE'S BEYOND *REPROACH!*

OF *COURSE!* IT'S THE ONLY *ANSWER!* WE WERE DECEIVED BY AN *IMPOSTOR!!*

--BY SOMEONE OUT TO *DESTROY* US!

BUT *WHO?*

I THINK I HAVE THE *ANSWER* TO THAT ONE--!

HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH *COMPUTERS*--HIS DETAILED, SEEMINGLY FOOL-PROOF *PLAN*--HIS KNOWLEDGE OF SCIENTIFIC *PROGRAMMING*--HIS COMPLEX, YET BRILLIANTLY EXECUTED *MOVES*--

IT ALL ADDS UP TO *ONE* DIABOLICALLY DANGEROUS FIGURE--

CAPTAIN! IF I GIVE YOU HIS LAST KNOWN LIST OF *HIDEOUTS*, WILL YOU ORDER AN IMMEDIATE CITY-WIDE *SEARCH* FOR--

--THE *MAD THINKER?!!*

I'LL LEAD THE SEARCH *MYSELF*, RICHARDS!

GOOD! THERE'S NOT A *MINUTE* TO LOSE!

SANTINI'S *LIFE* IS IN GREATER *PERIL* EACH SECOND THAT THE THINKER REMAINS *FREE!*

YOU *HEARD* THE MAN, SERGEANT! *ALERT ALL UNITS!!*

CANCEL ALL LEAVES! I WANT EVERY VEHICLE ON THE STREET THAT'S ABLE TO *ROLL*--AND I WANT 'EM *NOW!*

YES *SIR*, CAPTAIN!

WE'RE ON OUR *WAY!*

WHILE, ATOP THE DOOMED, STILL-SMOLDERING BUILDING--

THERE'S COPS 'N FIREMEN ALL *OVER* THE PLACE!

BUT THEY AINT GONNA BE ABLE TO STOP *ME!!*

NOTHIN'S GONNA STOP ME TILL I PUT THE *KIBOSH* ON RICHARDS--FER THE *LAST* TIME!

I CAN MAKE IT TO THE ROOF *BELOW* BY HANGIN' ONTO THIS SAGGIN' *DRAINPIPE!*

THE *SMOKE'LL* GIMME ENOUGH *COVER* TO DO WHAT I GOTTA DO BEFORE THEY *FIND* ME!

'N IF ANYONE *DOES* CATCH UP WITH ME--THAT'S SURE GONNA BE *HIS* HARD LUCK!!

A *COAT 'N HAT!* JUST WHAT I *NEED!*

KEEP THE *CROWD* BACK, MARTY!

WHAT D'YA FIGURE MADE HIM TURN *BAD* THAT WAY, BILL?

AS LONG AS THE *THING'S* ON THE LOOSE--NOBODY'S GONNA BE SAFE *ANYWHERE!*

I DUNNO! BUT HE BETTER BE *FOUND* --AND FINISHED OFF --BUT *FAST!*

WHEN SOMEONE LIKE *HIM* TURNS KILLER--YOU CAN'T TAKE ANY *CHANCES!*

HE'S GOTTA BE *STOPPED* --FOR GOOD--LIKE YOU'D STOP A *MAD DOG!*

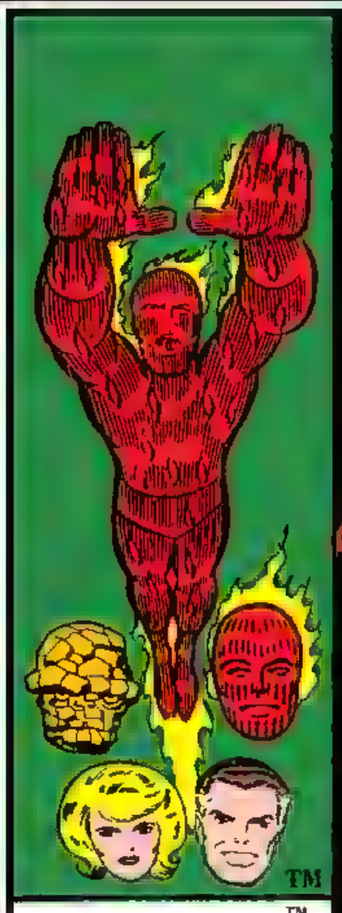
RICHARDS TURNED *EVERYONE* AGAINST ME! BUT IT AINT GONNA *HELP* 'IM!

I KNOW ALL HIS *TRICKS*--ALL HIS *SECRETS!*

--'N I GOT ALL THE *MUSCLE* I NEED-- TO *FINISH* OFF *THE FF--FOREVER!*

NEXT:

ONE DOWN TWO TO GO!



THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

"WHEN FALL THE MIGHTY!"

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

12¢ IND. | 70 JAN

MCG

ARE THE FABULOUS F.F. TRULY DEFEATED AT LAST?

"WHEN FALL THE MIGHTY"

FEARING FOR THE SAFETY OF DR. SANTINI, THE *MAD THINKER'S* HELPLESS CAPTIVE, REED AND JOHNNY LEAD THE RACE TO HIS LAST KNOWN *HIDEOUT*, ONLY TO FIND--

STAY BACK! THE PLACE IS GUARDED BY THE THINKER'S *KILLER ANDROIDS!*

CLICK! CLAK!

WARNING--ENEMY APPROACHING--

THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN *ALERTED!*

LOOK OUT FOR THEIR *SHOCK WEAPONS!*

IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER STANDING OVATION FOR:

SMILIN' **STAN LEE** and JOLLY **JACK KIRBY**

WHO HAVE GIVEN US ANOTHER TINTINNABULATING THRILLER!

SUPERBLY SUPPORTED BY:

JOE SINNOTT *INKER* | **ARTIE SIMEK** *LETTERER*

TAKE COVER! I CAN AVOID THE BLASTS-- BUT IF ONE OF YOU IS HIT--!

THOP!

REED! LET THEM GO! HURRY!

I CAN HANDLE THEM WITH MY FLAME--

BUT I'M AFRAID OF SCORCHING YOUR ARMS!!

THOP!

OKAY, JOHNNY--!

BUT WE'LL NEED SPLIT-SECOND TIMING!

NOW!

HOLD YOUR FIRE!

GIVE THE FF A CHANCE!

IT WORKED!

ONE HIGH-INTENSITY HEAT BLAST IS ENOUGH TO WELD THEIR CONTROL CIRCUITS TOGETHER!

SPOK!

GOOD WORK, RICHARDS!

BY GETTING HIM IN POSITION, AND THEN DUCKING OUT OF THE WAY--YOU'VE GIVEN US A PERFECT TARGET!

THEY'RE SO FAST-- SO DANGEROUS--IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THEY'RE REALLY NOT ALIVE!

THEY COULDN'T BE AS DEADLY IF THEY WERE ALIVE!

THE THINKER GAVE THEM SPLIT-SECOND COMPUTERS TO USE AS BRAINS!

THIS FINISHES THE *LAST* OF THEM!

NOW WE'VE GOTTA FIND *SANTINI!*

BUT KEEP YOUR *EYES* PEELED! THE *THINKER* USUALLY HAS ONE *SUPER-POWERED* ANDROID THAT HE KEEPS IN RESERVE!

THERE'S NO SIGN OF ONE *HERE!*

FOLLOW RICHARDS, MEN!

HE KNOWS THE THINKER'S STRATEGY BETTER THAN *ANYONE!*

TORCH! FLAME ON *AHEAD!*

BUT *CAREFUL,* LAD!

ALL CLEAR SO FAR!

NO *SIGN* OF HIM YET!

SLOW DOWN, JOHNNY!

DON'T GET *OVER-CONFIDENT!*

DON'T EVER *FORGET*-- HE'S MOST *DANGEROUS* WHEN HE TAKES YOU BY *SURPRISE!*

YOUR WORDS ARE TRUER THAN YOU *THINK,* RICHARDS!

I'VE ALREADY MANAGED TO TURN THE BESTIAL *THING* AGAINST THEM!

NOW, ONCE I *FLOOD* THE CHAMBER-- THERE'LL BE *NONE LEFT*-- SAVE FOR THE VIRTUALLY HELPLESS *INVISIBLE GIRL!*

PREDICTION: IN 2.07 MINUTES, I WILL HAVE *DESTROYED* RICHARDS AND THE FLAMING *TEENAGER!*

I--SHOULD HAVE *LISTENED*--TO REED!

WOOF

HE'S FLOODING THE CHAMBER!

SHE!

BUT, IF YOU THINK A LITTLE *FLOOD* IS ALL OUR HEROES HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT, *FORGET IT!* LOOK WHO *ELSE* IS HERE--!

DAILY BUGLE

THING RUNS AMOK! CITY-WIDE DRAGNET!

RICHARDS AINT IN THE *BAXTER BUILDING!*

BUT HE CAN'T HIDE FROM ME *FOREVER!*

I'LL FIND 'IM *SOONER* OR LATER--

AND THE SAME GOES FOR THAT PUNK *TORCH,* ALSO!

SO EVERYONE'S *LOOKIN'* FOR ME, HUH?

WELL, IT'LL BE *TOO BAD* FER THE ONE WHO'S DUMB ENUFF TO *FIND* ME!

EVERYONE'S WALKIN' AROUND LOOKIN' *SCARED!*

--LIKE THEY EXPECT ME TO POP UP OUTTA THE *WOODWORK,* OR SOMETHIN'!

WELL, MEBBE THEY *OUGHTTA* BE SCARED!

EVER SINCE RICHARDS TRIED SANTINI'S *MACHINE* ON ME-- 'N IT DIDN'T *WORK*--I GOT NO USE FOR *NOBODY!**

BATTLE ATOP CITY HALL

THING RUNS AMOK! CITY-WIDE DRAGNET!

LET'S GET HOME *RIGHT AWAY!*

IF THE THING REALLY *HAS* TURNED BAD-- *NO ONE* WILL BE SAFE!

*THAT'S WHAT *STARTED* THE WHOLE THING, REMEMBER? THE *THINKER* TAMPERED WITH THE EXPERIMENT OF *REED* AND *SANTINI,* CAUSING THE MACHINE TO AFFECT BEN'S *BRAIN!*
--SOUL-OF-SINCERITY STAN.

EVERY COP IN *TOWN* MUST BE LOOKIN' FOR ME!

I AINT SCARED OF *NOTHIN'* --BUT I DON'T WANT NO ONE TO *INTERRUPT* ME TILL I GIT MY HANDS ON *RICHARDS!*

SO I BETTER GIT *UNDER COVER* FOR A WHILE!

HEY, TAXI!-- C'MERE! I WANNA *RIDE!*

TAXI! WHAT'SAMATTER-- ARE THEY ALL DEAF 'N DUMB?*?!*

THE CREEPS ARE JUST PASSIN' ME *BY!*

WHO D'YA THINK YER *IGNORIN'* YA PUNKS!

NO ONE GIVES THE BRUSH TO BENJAMIN J. GRIMM--AN' THAT MEANS *NO ONE!*

LOOK! RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE *STREET!*

IT'S THE THING!

SOMEONE GO FOR THE *POLICE--HURRY!*

I'M LOOKIN' FER A *LIFT!*

HE'S GOT US *BLOCKED!*

WE CAN'T MOVE *FORWARD*-- AND WE CAN'T *BACK UP!*

AN' I WANT IT *NOW!*

THERE'S ONLY *ONE* THING TO *DO* --DRIVE *STRAIGHT AHEAD!*

HE *HAS* TO GET OUT OF THE *WAY!*

SO YA THINK YA CAN *SCARE* ME OUTTA THE *WAY,* HUH?

THIS'LL SHOW YA HOW SCARED I AM OF ANY CRUMMY HEAP ON THE ROAD!--AN' THAT GOES FOR ANY *TRUCK,* OR *BUS*--OR *TANK!*

PUT YER *EYES* BACK IN YER HEADS, *ALLA* YA!

YA OUGHTTA BE *GLAD* I'M TAKIN' MY LITTLE *TEMPER TANTRUM* OUT ON YER *ENGINE*-- AN' NOT ON ANY O' *YOU*--

AT LEAST-- NOT *YET!*

SPLINK

SCREEEE

SIRENS! IT'S THE *COPS!*

THERE HE IS!
GET THAT BAZOOKA UP HERE-- ON THE DOUBLE!
NOTHING SMALLER THAN THAT IS GONNA BE ABLE TO STOP HIM!
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY WHEN WE WERE OUT TO FINISH OFF THE STRONGEST MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
MISTER, WHEN SOMEONE AS STRONG AS THE THING TURNS BAD--YOU DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES!

NUTS! I AINT GONNA FIGHT THE WHOLE BLASTED CITY UNTIL I PUT THE KIBOSH ON RICHARDS!
ONCE I SQUASH HIM INTA THE GROUND, I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS!
PTING!
FTONG!

I CAN HEAR 'EM RUNNIN' UP ABOVE!
MUST BE FIGGERIN' TO DRAG SOME'A THEM BAZOOKAS DOWN HERE AFTER ME!
BUT ME-- I GOT PLANS OF MY OWN--!

AN' THEY DON'T INCLUDE DODGIN' ANY BOOM-BOOM SHELLS IF I CAN HELP IT!
SO I'LL JUST RIP ME OUT AN ARMFUL'A ROCK'N CEMENT--

HE--SHOVED ALL THAT-- UP THRU THE MANHOLE-- SINGLE-HANDED!!
BY THE TIME WE CAN DISLODGE IT, HE'LL BE SAFELY GONE!
HOW CAN YOU FIGHT ANYONE WITH STRENGTH LIKE THAT?

WHILE, BACK AT FF HQ, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THERE IS ANOTHER WHO PONDERS THE SAME QUESTION--

IF BEN EVER CATCHES REED AND JOHNNY--WHAT CHANCE WILL THEY HAVE?

NO, SUE! YOU MUSTN'T SAY THAT! YOU MUSTN'T EVEN LET YOURSELF CONSIDER SUCH A THING!

ESPECIALLY AT A TIME LIKE THIS-- WHEN YOU SHOULD BE UNTROUBLED-- UNWORRIED!

BUT--JUST BECAUSE-- I'M GOING TO HAVE A BABY-- MUST I FORSAKE MY HUSBAND-- AND MY BROTHER??

THEY MAY NEED ME NOW--MORE THAN EVER BEFORE!

YOUR BABY WILL NEED YOU TOO, SUE DEAR--!

YOU KNOW THAT'S THE WAY REED AND JOHNNY WOULD WANT IT!

NOW THAT WE'VE DEMONSTRATED HOW HARD WE TRY NOT TO LOSE TRACK OF OUR SEEMINGLY COUNTLESS CHARACTERS, LET'S RETURN TO THE FLAMING FIREBRAND WHO HAS WON CRYSTAL'S HEART--

SO FAR I'VE MANAGED TO STAY ABOVE THE FLOODWAVE--

BUT, IF IT GETS ANY HIGHER-- ENDSVILLE!

OKAY THEN, TORCHY-- THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO--!

DON'T LET IT GET ANY HIGHER!

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO DRAIN MOST OF IT OFF--

BY BURNING A DEEP PIT RIGHT IN THE PATH OF THE TORRENT!

WOW! THE KID CAME THRU AGAIN!

IF THAT AVALANCHE OF WATER HAD MANAGED TO HIT US--IT WOULD HAVE BEEN CURTAINS!

THE THINKER MUST HAVE BEEN DESPERATE TO TRY SOMETHING LIKE THAT!

IT CAN ONLY MEAN WE'RE GETTING CLOSE TO HIM-- TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT!

THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR??

LET'S KEEP MOVING!

I JUST SCOUTED THE CORRIDOR AHEAD!

THERE'S NOTHING UP THERE--AS FAR AS I CAN SEE!

THAT'S SMALL COMFORT, LAD!

IF A TRAP IS AWAITING US--

IT'S NOT LIKELY THAT WE'D EASILY SEE IT!

AWW, C'MON, BROTHER-IN-LAW!

ANYONE EVER TELL YOU THAT YOU WORRY TOO MUCH?

JOHNNY-- WAIT! COME BACK!

THERE'S NOTHING THE THINKER CAN TOSS AT US THAT MY FLAME CAN'T HANDLE!

OUR PIGEON IS PROBABLY SHAKING IN HIS BOOTS RIGHT N---; UNHHH!=

AN INVISIBLE ELECTRO-WALL BARRIER!!

IT--GOT-- JOHNNY!!

THANK HEAVENS! HE'S STILL ALIVE!

HIS FLAMING BODY WAS ABLE TO ABSORB THE IMPACT--

BUT THE SUDDEN SHOCK KNOCKED HIM OUT!

OKAY, THINKER --WHEREVER YOU ARE--THE GLOVES ARE OFF!

NOW I'M COMING AFTER YOU --MYSELF!

PREDICTION: RICHARDS WILL REACH ME IN EXACTLY 43.9 SECONDS!

WHICH WILL BE TIME ENOUGH FOR ME TO DISPOSE OF SANTINI-- BEFORE WE COME FACE-TO-FACE!

COME OUT, DR. SANTINI! YOUR FINAL FATE AWAITS YOU!

TO ME YOU WERE NO MORE THAN A MACHINE--ONE WHICH EXISTED MERELY TO SERVE ME!

AND, WHEN A MACHINE OUT-LIVES ITS PURPOSE-- THERE IS NOTHING TO DO BUT DESTROY IT!

SKAKK

YOU--WOULD MURDER ME-- IN COLD BLOOD?

MURDER IS SUCH AN UNPLEASANT WORD!

LET US SAY, INSTEAD, THAT I SHALL DISPOSE OF SOME EMBARRASSING EVIDENCE!

SORRY, FRANTIC ONE--WE MUST INTERRUPT AGAIN--BUT VERY BRIEFLY--AS A SUBWAY WORK CREW MAKES A STARTLING DISCOVERY--

GIT THAT LIGHT OUTTA MY EYES-- OR ELSE--!

HEY! IT'S THE THING!

I DUNNO ABOUT YOU--BUT FOR ME IT'S QUITTIN' TIME!

TAKE OFF, YA CREEPS!

NUTS! NOW THEY'LL SPREAD THE ALARM!

QUICK! THERE'S AN EXIT JUST AHEAD!

WELL, WELL! LOOK WHAT *WE* GOT!

THIS'LL GIT ME OUTTA HERE A LOT FASTER'N *WALKIN'!!*

THE THING!

WHY AREN'T *YOU* AT THE *THINKER'S* HEADQUARTERS -- WITH THE *REST* OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR?!!*

3621

AINTCHA *HEERD,* SONNY? WE GOT US A LITTLE *FEUD* GOIN' RIGHT NOW!

HEY! WAIT A MINNIT!

WHERE DIDJA SAY THEY ARE?

JUST *AHEAD--* ABOVE THE NEXT *STATION!*

THE RADIO'S BEEN BROAD-CASTING *BULLETINS* ALL DAY!

NOW I KNOW WHERE THEY MUST BE!

I REMEMBER THE TIME WE *BATTLED* THE THINKER-- RIGHT IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD!

JUST KEEP THIS CRATE *MOVIN',* BIG MOUTH!

I DON'T WANNA BE *LATE* TO A CERTAIN *APPOINT-MENT* I GOT!

AND, EVEN AS THE *THING* HEADS FOR THIS VERY SITE--

RICHARDS! WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU *DOING??*

THE ONLY WAY TO GET *THRU* THIS BARRIER IS TO SLITHER *UNDER* IT--

A JOB FOR WHICH *MR. FANTASTIC* HAS SOME VERY PARTICULAR *QUALIFI-CATIONS--!*

HOLD MY *LEGS* FLAT-- TILL I'M *CLEAR--!*

EASY, SON-- YOU'LL BE OKAY!

DON'T PULL THAT TRIGGER, THINKER!

RICHARDS!! YOU ARRIVED *SEVEN SECONDS TOO SOON!*

ONLY BY *YOUR* STANDARDS, MADMAN-- NOT *MINE!*

BUT YOUR *PRESENCE* WILL ALTER *NOTHING!*

KRAK!

IT MERELY MEANS I WILL *LIQUIDATE* YOU SEVEN SECONDS *SOONER!*

HAH! AGILE AS YOU *ARE*--YOU COULDN'T DODGE *ALL* THE EFFECTS OF MY *BLAST!*

UNNHHH!

HAVE YOU *FORGOTTEN* THAT ALL MY PREDICTIONS ARE BASED UPON *COMPUTERIZED* STUDIES??

AIDED BY MY *MEMORY BANKS*--AND MY *THINKING MACHINES*--I CAN NEVER BE *WRONG!*

BUT THERE IS *ONE* THING YOU *CANNOT* PROGRAM YOURSELF FOR, THINKER--!

WHAT, RICHARDS?? *TELL ME!* I MUST *KNOW!* WHAT *IS* IT??

THE *HUMAN* FACTOR--

WHICH ALWAYS CONTAINS THE ELEMENT OF *SURPRISE!*

NO! YOU *MUSTN'T* SHOOT HIM--!

--SUCH AS *SANTINI'S* UNEXPECTED *ATTACK* UPON YOU!

SANTINI?!!

YOU THINK A BUMBLING *MILKSOP* LIKE *HIM* CAN ALTER MY FLAWLESS *PREDICTIONS???!*

NEVER!

AT *MOST,* HE CONSTITUTES A MINOR, IRRITATING *DELAY!*

BUT THAT *DELAY* WAS ALL I *NEEDED*--

TO GET THE *WHIP HAND* ONCE AGAIN!

MY COMPUTERS *PREDICTED* A HAND-TO-HAND STRUGGLE BETWEEN US!

BUT I AM *NOT WORRIED!*

DESPITE YOUR ACCURSED *FLEXIBLE LIMBS*-- AND YOUR SUPERIOR *SKILL*--YOU ARE BATTERED AND BRUISED--YOU ARE *WEARY*-- ON THE VERGE OF *EXHAUSTION!*

THEREFORE, MY *FINAL PREDICTION*--

TOTAL *VICTORY* FOR THE *THINKER* IN EXACTLY ONE MINUTE AND FOURTEEN SECONDS!

ALL RIGHT, MURDERER-- YOU *HAD* YOUR SAY--!

BUT *AGAIN* YOU'VE MADE ONE *FATAL MISTAKE!*

YOU DIDN'T TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A MAN'S *FIGHTING SPIRIT!*

THE SPIRIT THAT MAKES A MAN *GO ON*--

EVEN THOUGH HIS *BODY* CAN TAKE *NO MORE*--!

THE SPIRIT THAT MAKES A MAN WILLING TO *DIE* FOR WHAT HE *BELIEVES* IN--

THE SPIRIT THAT *NO* COMPUTER --*NO* ELECTRONIC THINKING MACHINE--

WILL *EVER* BE ABLE TO MEASURE-- OR TO *PREDICT!*

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, *OUTSIDE* THE GRIM, FATEFUL CHAMBER--

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE *STRONG* ENOUGH NOW, KID?

I'VE *GOT* TO BE!

ANYTHING COULD BE HAPPENING TO MY *PARTNER* IN THERE RIGHT NOW!

IF I CAN JUST *MELT DOWN* THE CONTROL DEVICES WHICH MAINTAIN THE ELECTRO-BARRIER--! *THERE!* IT'S *WORKING!*

YOU *DID* IT! YOU *DISSOLVED* THE BARRIER!

LET'S GO, MEN!

REED! WHAT *HAPPENED* IN HERE??

ARE YOU *OKAY?*

I'M-- ALL RIGHT--!

HE'S THE ONE--WHO MADE POOR *BEN*--TURN *BAD!*

THEN YOU WERE *RIGHT* ALL ALONG!

THE MAD THINKER *IMPERSONATED* DR. SANTINI!

WHAT *ABOUT* SANTINI--?

HE JUST NEEDS SOME *REST!* HE FOUGHT--WITH GALLANTRY!

I GUESS EVERYTHING'LL BE *OKAY* NOW, EH?

OKAY?!! HAVE YOU *FORGOTTEN*--??

THE *THING* IS STILL AT LARGE--HIS *BRAIN* TWISTED BY THE *THINKER'S* EVIL MANIPULATIONS--!

BUT WE'LL *FIND* HIM--AND *EXPLAIN* EVERYTHING, WON'T WE, REED?

THAT'S JUST *IT!* WE *CAN'T* EXPLAIN! HE'S *TOO FAR GONE!* HE'S OUT TO *DESTROY* US!

AND--HE HAS THE *POWER*-- TO *DO* IT!

YES, THE *POWER*--AND THE *STRENGTH*--AND THE UNBRIDLED *HATRED*, AS WELL--!

JUST ANOTHER FEW BLOCKS 'N I'LL BE *THERE!*

NO ONE'S GONNA STOP ME *NOW!*

SUB
DOW
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I SHOULD'A REALIZED *LONG AGO* THAT RICHARDS IS MY *ENEMY!*

THAT'S WHY I GOTTA *SMASH* THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

I GOTTA *WIPE 'EM OUT*-- FOREVER!

IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO *PAY 'EM BACK*-- FER WHAT THEY *DID* TA ME!!

WHILE, BACK AT THE EX-SCENE OF BATTLE--

WHAT DO WE DO *NEXT*, REED?

HOW ARE WE GONNA FIND-- POOR *BEN?*

I'VE A HUNCH THAT *HE'LL* BE FINDING *US*, JOHNNY--

AS SOON AS HE *CAN!*

THEN SHOULDN'T WE BE *PREPARING* SOMETHING?

I'M 'WAY *AHEAD* OF YOU, LAD!

IF I CAN MANAGE TO *POSITION* BEN AT JUST THE RIGHT SPOT IN MY LAB--!

BUT, BEFORE THE GRIMLY DETERMINED *REED RICHARDS* CAN UTTER ANOTHER WORD--

THOK!

LOOK OUT!

AWRIGHT, RICHARDS-- THIS IS *IT!*

HE'S HERE!

BEN!

ZOK!

NO, BEN--WAIT! LET'S TALK THIS OVER, BIG BUDDY!

SHUDDUP, YA LITTLE PUNK!

I'LL GIT TO YOU LATER!

OKAY--IF THAT'S HOW YOU WANT IT--

FLAME ON!

BEN--DON'T DO ANYTHING YOU'LL BE SORRY FOR!

YOU DON'T REALLY HATE US, OLD FRIEND! IT'S THE MAD THINKER --HE IMPERSONATED DR. SANTINI--AND MANAGED TO AFFECT YOUR BRAIN!

IT'S NO USE! I'M NOT REACHING HIM!

I'VE GOT TO FIGHT HIM--

THERE'S NO OTHER WAY!

IF I MOVE FAST--WRAPPING MYSELF AROUND HIM--I CAN EXERT ENOUGH LEVERAGE --TO FORCE HIM--INTO THE STREET!

THERE'S LESS CHANCE OF HURTING HIM THIS WAY!

STAY BACK, JOHNNY!

KRRR

YA DON'T THINK THAT'S GONNA HELP YA--!

ALL I GOTTA DO IS USE MY WEIGHT--TO THROW MYSELF BACK OVER YA--LIKE THIS!

--'N THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNIN', YA TWO-TIMIN' CRUMB!

-UNNHHHH!-

BEN! YOU HURT HIM!

DON'T! LET GO OF REED-- BEN--I'M WARNING YOU--!

YEAH? I'M JUST SHIVERIN' IN MY LITTLE BOOTIES, JUNIOR!

OKAY, BLUE EYES-- YOU ASKED FOR IT!

HUH--?!!

SZT

GIT BACK, YA FLAMIN' CREEP--

OR WHATEVER HAPPENS TO ME WILL HAPPEN TO RICHARDS--IN SPADES!

HAH! I FIGGERED THAT WOULD GIT RIDDA YA!

YA WOULDN'T WANT ANYONE TO HURT YER PRECIOUS LITTLE LEADER!

HE'S RIGHT! IF I USE MY FLAME AGAINST BEN--

THERE'S NO WAY TO SPARE REED, AS WELL!

STAY CLEAR, JOHNNY!

DON'T WRITE ME OFF YET--!

YER WHISTLIN' IN THE DARK, MISTER!

THIS IS WHERE YA GIT IT NOW --AND YOU KNOW IT!

NOT IF--I CAN REACH-- THAT LOW-FLYING POLICE 'COPTER!

YOU DID IT, REED!

NOW YOU'VE GOT THE UPPER HAND!

IF BEN LETS GO OF YOU-- HE'S FINISHED!

THIS AINT GONNA SAVE YA!

I CAN HANG ON FOREVER!

THIS IS WHAT I WAS HOPING FOR--!

THE BAXTER BUILDING IS JUST BELOW!

NOW, IF I CAN HOLD OUT A MINUTE LONGER--!

THAT'S *IT*, RICHARDS-- *HANG ON!*

THE LONGER IT *TAKES*, THE MORE I'M GONNA *ENJOY* CLOBBERIN' YA!

MY STRENGTH --ALMOST *GONE!*

WHAT HAPPENS *NEXT*-- WHEN HE ATTACKS *AGAIN!*

BUT, STILL *ANOTHER* DEADLY PROBLEM IS A'BORNING FOR THE DESPERATE FF--

I DON'T *GET* IT!

THE *MAD THINKER* HAS BEEN *BEATEN*-- HE'S TRAPPED IN A *CELL*--

LET 'IM GRIN!

AND *STILL* HE'S GRINNIN' LIKE HE'S GOT AN *ACE* UP HIS SLEEVE!

THERE'S NOTHING HE CAN *DO* --WHILE HE'S LOCKED IN *THERE!*

HAH! IF THEY ONLY *KNEW!*

IT IS NOW TIME FOR ME TO TURN *AWAY*--AS THOUGH I'M LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW-- LOST IN *THOUGHT!*

BUT--THE THOUGHTS I AM THINKING HAVE ONLY *ONE* PRIME PURPOSE--

THE *DESTRUCTION* OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

LUCKILY, THEY DID NOT TAKE MY *WRIST-WATCH* FROM ME--

FOR, HOW COULD THEY SUSPECT THAT IT'S FAR *MORE* THAN A SIMPLE TIME-PIECE?

PREDICTION: WITHIN 6.09 SECONDS IT WILL SIGNAL MY MOST POWERFUL *ANDROID* TO PERFORM ITS PRE-PROGRAMMED TASK--!

EXACTLY 6.09 SECONDS LATER, AN INDESTRUCTIBLE, 12-FOOT TALL FIGURE SEEMS TO COME *ALIVE*--

SMASHING THRU THE SOLID-STEEL DOOR OF ITS SECRET CRYPT WITH ONE EFFORTLESS MOTION--!

WHILE, AT THAT VERY INSTANT--

OKAY, CRUMB-BUM--YER REST TIME'S *OVER!*

THE *MACHINE!* --IF I CAN JUST--GET HIM--UNDER THE *MACHINE--!*

GOT TO *LOOSEN UP*--BECOME *LIMP*--

HE'S COMING *AT* ME--!

I OWE YA *PLENTY*, MISTER--FER TURNIN' ME INTO A WALKIN' *MONSTER*--

AND HERE'S WHERE I *SETTLE* THAT BILL-- *PAID IN FULL!*

BUT THEN--

REED WAS *RIGHT--!*

YOU *HAVE* CHANGED-- YOU *HAVE* BECOME A KILLER--

--TURNED INTO SOME-ONE TOO DANGEROUS TO *LIVE!*

OKAY, TORCH-- YER JUST IN *TIME--!*

DIDJA FERGET THAT *I'M* THE ONLY GUY WHOSE SKIN CAN *TAKE* YER FLAME FOR A FEW SECONDS--?

AND A FEW SECONDS IS ALL I'M GONNA *NEED*--FER *YOU!*

-:UNHHH!:-

ALL I GOTTA DO IS TOSS YA IN THIS *SOUND-BLAST TUNNEL*--

IT'LL SNUFF OUT YER FLAME LIKE A BUSTED *MATCH!*

AND, AS THE DESPERATE BATTLE REACHES ITS INEVITABLE CLIMAX--

SPKAK!

WHA- WHAT IS *THAT?!!*

I'M NOT HANGIN' AROUND TO FIND *OUT!*

IT'S--NOT PAYING ANY *ATTENTION*-- TO *US!!*

IT'S HEADING *ACROSS THE STREET*-- TOWARDS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE *FF!!*

IT'S *STRONGER* THAN A *BULLDOZER!!* IT SNAPPED THAT *IRON LAMPPOST* OUT OF THE WAY LIKE A *TWIG!!*

KR R A K!

AND THEN, IN A MATTER OF *SECONDS*--

SLOWLY, INEXORABLY THE EMOTIONLESS CREATURE'S MAGNETIC SHOES BRING HIM UP THE SIDE OF THE BAXTER BUILDING... TOWARDS THE FATEFUL 35TH FLOOR--!

THOOM! THOOM!

THE SOUNDPROOF FLOOR WHERE THE GRIM, DEADLY BATTLE NEARS ITS ULTIMATE CONCLUSION--

NOW, WHILE BEN'S BACK IS TOWARDS ME--

THIS IS MY CHANCE --AT LAST!

CLAK!

THE MENTA-WAVE UNIT IS AIMED RIGHT AT HIM--!

ARRHHHH!

REED! YOU--YOU DID IT! HE'S COLLAPSING!

BUT--HE--HE'S NOT BREATHING--ANY MORE--!

YOU'VE-- KILLED-- HIM!!!

THEN, AT THAT VERY INSTANT--

SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS HAPPENING IN THERE--I JUST KNOW IT!

I'M ALMOST AFRAID--TO OPEN THE DOOR!

THAT NOISE-- INSIDE--

--LIKE SOMETHING SMASHING DOWN THE WALL!

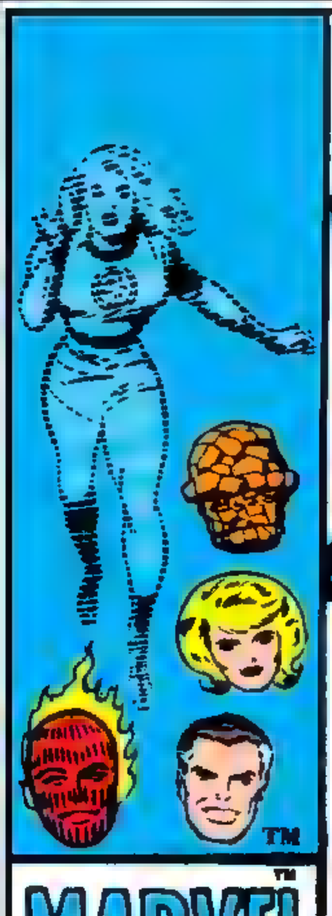
AND THEN--AT LAST--THE GRIM, SENSES-SHATTERING CONFRONTATION--

BEN --HE'S DEAD!

AND REED --JOHNNY!! WHA--?!!

COMING THRU THE WALL-- A GIANT, MIND-LESS ANDROID!

NEXT ISSUE: ...AND SO IT ENDS...!



THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

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SIZZLING BIG ACTION ISSUE!

THIS IS IT! ONE OF THE FIGHTING F.F.'S GREATEST BATTLES!

...AND SO IT ENDS...

HEARING THE SOUNDS OF A BLUDGEONING BATTLE, SUE RICHARDS BREAKS INTO HER HUSBAND'S LAB...ONLY TO FIND...

REED!! JOHNNY!! BEN MUST HAVE KILLED THEM... BOTH!!

NO!! THEY...THEY'RE ONLY WOUNDED...ALL OF THEM!

BUT WHO...WHAT IS THAT...COMING TOWARDS ME..??

IT'S AN ANDROID... HE CRASHED IN...THROUGH THE OUTSIDE WALL!

ONE OF THE GREATEST ACTION-THRILLERS EVER PRODUCED BY:

STAN (THE MAN) LEE & JACK (KING) KIRBY

EMBELLISHMENT: JOE SINNOTT

LETTERING: SAM ROSEN

HE'S THE *MAD THINKER'S* LARGEST... MOST POWERFUL ANDROID OF *ALL!*

EVEN THOUGH THE THINKER IS IN *JAIL*... HE MUST HAVE FOUND *SOME* WAY TO HURL HIM *AGAINST* US!

INSTANT SUMMARY DEPT.:

THE EVIL *MAD THINKER* AFFECTED THE BRAIN OF THE *THING*, TURNING HIM AGAINST THE *FF!* IN A LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO *SAVE* THEM ALL, *REED RICHARDS* HURLED A *MENTA-WAVE BOLT* AT HIM... AND THEN, THE THREE COMBATANTS SLOWLY LOST CONSCIOUSNESS!

AND *NOW*... BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES, HERO!! WE'RE *OFF*...!!

I CAN'T SAVE THE *OTHERS* FROM HIM...

UNLESS I SAVE *MYSELF*, FIRST!

I'VE GOT TO TURN *INVISIBLE*.. WHILE I STILL *CAN!!*

SPASK!

HE'S ACTUALLY A DEADLY *MULTI-FUNCTION MACHINE*... BUILT INTO THE SHAPE OF A *MAN!*

I VANISHED JUST IN *TIME!* HE'S CONFUSED.. BAFFLED...

HE'S NOW STARTING TO TURN *AWAY...!*

HE'S *FORGOTTEN* ME! HE'S CHOOSING TO ATTACK WHAT HE CAN *SEE!*

I'VE GOT TO *DISTRACT* HIM... I NEED A *WEAPON*.. *ANY* WEAPON..!!

REED'S *ELECTI-FORCE BEAM!!*

HE DESIGNED IT AS AN AID IN HIS *ENERGY RESEARCH!*

IF ONLY... IT HAS ENOUGH *POWER..!!*

AAC

ZZCK!

IT WORKED! BUT---

IT GENERATED *TOO MUCH* POWER!! IT'S CRACKLING THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE *LAB*...!

IT'S HITTING *BEN*... LIKE A SUDDEN *LIGHTNING BLAST!!*

IT'S AFFECTED *ALL* OF US--- EVEN *JOHNNY!*

BUT IT WAS A STROKE OF *LUCK!!* IT'S *REVIVING* THEM ALL!!

THE *ANDROID* ABSORBED THE *MAIN* FORCE---BUT, IT DIDN'T *HURT* HIM!

REED, DARLING--- *WAKE UP!! HURRY!!*

SUE! YOU *SAVED* US--- BY GAINING US *TIME!*

BUT NOW--- *TAKE COVER!* THE ANDROID *SENSES* HE MUST DESTROY HIS INVISIBLE ENEMY!

HIS HEAD IS CONVERTING TO *RADAR-SCAN FUNCTION*... TO PICK UP YOUR IMAGE!!

SAVE YOURSELF, DEAREST...!
I--I'M STILL-- TOO WEAK!!
BLACKING OUT...AGAIN--
HE'S LOOKING IN MY DIRECTION!
HE'S GETTING A RADAR IMAGE OF ME!!
IF REED HADN'T WARNED ME IN TIME---HE'D HAVE HAD ME!!
CRASH!
I CAN'T KEEP DODGING HIM FOREVER!!
HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON??!
IT'S BEN!! HE'S REVIVED!!
BUT---IS HE STILL A RAGING KILLER... UNDER THE THINKER'S CONTROL ??
OR...DID REED'S MENTA-WAVE BOLT CHANGE HIM ?
SOME KINDA ROBOT--GOIN' AFTER SUSIE!!
NOT WHILE BLUE-EYED BENJAMIN IS AROUND!
BEN!! YOU'RE BACK TO NORMAL AGAIN!

BUT, SUE'S SUDDEN *ELATION* IS DESTINED TO BE TRAGICALLY *SHORT-LIVED*... FOR, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, THE MIGHTY ANDROID FIRES THE *POWER JETS*, LOCATED IN ITS BACK, DIRECTLY INTO A STARTLED BEN GRIMM--!

SHOOP!

BEN'S STRENGTH *SAVED* HIM... BUT, HE'S *HURT*... WEAKENED!!

AND THE ANDROID IS ABOUT TO ATTACK *AGAIN*!!

MY *INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD*!!

IT'S GOT TO *CUSHION* THE BLOW... GIVE BEN TIME TO *RECOVER* HIMSELF!!

IT *WORKED*! HE'S SNAPPING *OUT* OF IT AGAIN!

SO YER LOOKIN' FER SOME *ACTION*, HUH??

OKAY, CHARLIE-- IN CASE NOBODY *TOLD* YA---

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!!

HEY! TAKE IT EASY THERE!!

YA THINK THEM EXPENSIVE WALLS JUST GROW ON BLASTED TREES?!!

THE LEAST HE COULDA DONE WUZ ANSWER A GUY!

I GUESS HE JUST AIN'T GOT NO COUTH!

NOW, HOW'S ABOUT CLUIN' ME IN, SUSIE?

MY HEAD'S KINDA HAZY ABOUT--- HEY!!

THE KID'S COLLAPSIN'!!! IT MUST'A BEEN TOO MUCH FER HER!

SUSIE GAL!! ARE YA OKAY?

C'MON... SPEAK TO ME!! YOU GOTTA!!

SUSIE!! SNAP OUT OF IT, KID!!

TELL ME YER ALL RIGHT!!

MEBBE...IF I SHAKE HER...I CAN WAKE 'ER UP..!!

HEY!! WHA--?!!

=MPFFF!=

DROP HER, YOU KILLER!

I TRIED EVERYTHING I COULD TO BRING YOU BACK TO NORMAL!

BUT, I FAILED!

LEGGO!! ARE YA NUTS..?!!

=UNHHH!!=

MAYBE I AM.!! MAYBE THE SIGHT OF YOU--- HURTING MY WIFE... HAS DRIVEN ME MAD!!

BUT NOW I KNOW THERE'S NO HOPE FOR YOU!

YOU'RE TOO DANGEROUS TOO LIVE!

YOU GOTTA BE *KIDDIN'!!!*

I WUZ TRYIN' TO *HELP* HER!

WHAT'S *WITH* YOU? THIS IS *BEN*...YER BLUSHIN' *BUDDY*... REMEMBER??

IT WON'T *WORK!*

YOU'D SAY *ANYTHING* TO SAVE YOUR-SELF!

LOOKS LIKE I CAME TO JUST IN *TIME*, REED!

HERE... ...I'LL HOLD HIM *OFF* FOR YOU!

NOW I KNOW IT!

THE *TWO* OF YA MUSTA *FLIPPED!*

YA BLASTED *IDJITS!!* I WUZ JUST TRYIN' TO SAVE SUE FROM THAT NUTTY *ROBOT!!*

HE *LOOKS* LIKE HE MEANS IT, REED!

BEN WAS *NEVER* A LIAR...NO MATTER *WHAT!*

MAYBE YOUR MENTA-WAVE GIZMO *DID* WORK!

HE'S---TELLING THE---*TRUTH*--!

SUE... DARLING!! YOU'RE *ALL RIGHT!*

REED!! OH, REED... IT'S BEEN LIKE A *NIGHTMARE*... BUT, IT'S *OVER* NOW!

WHILE THE *THREE* OF YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS--- THE THINKER'S GIANT *ANDROID* ATTACKED US---!

BUT HE FELL TO HIS DEATH--ON THE STREET BELOW!

FELL? HONEY... A *FALL* COULDN'T KILL A LIFELESS *ANDROID!!*

AND, EVEN AS THE FOUR REUNITED ADVENTURERS PULL THEMSELVES TOGETHER---

HE FELL FROM THE TOP OF THE *BAXTER BUILDING!*

MUST BE *ANOTHER* ONE OF THE FF'S NUTTY *EXPERIMENTS!*

LOOK! HE CAME RIGHT THROUGH THE *WALL!*

HEY!! LOOK AT *THAT!*

HE'S WEARING *LIFT DEVICES...* SNAPPING OUT OF HIS *HEELS!*

CLIK!

CLIK!

HEY... LOOK OUT!!

HE'S COMING TO *LIFE* AGAIN!!

SOME KINDA *POWER JETS...* ON HIS *BACK...* ARE THRUSTING HIM *UP!!*

GANGWAY! WHATEVER HE'S *AFTER,* IT AIN'T *FLOWER POWER!*

HE'S FLOATING *UPWARD...* TOWARD THE FF'S *PENTHOUSE!*

WHILE, ON THE THIRTY-FIFTH FLOOR ---

OKAY, JUNIOR... YA CAN KNOCK OFF THE *FIREWORKS!*

I AIN'T NO *TALENT SCOUT* FOR THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW!

SORRY, BEN! I JUST COULDN'T TAKE ANY *CHANCES!*

YOU PROBABLY DON'T *REMEMBER*... BUT THE *MAD THINKER* FOUND SOME WAY TO TURN YOU *AGAINST* US, AND...

HEY!!

NOW WHAT?!!

BEHIND YOU, BEN!! COMING IN FROM OUTSIDE!! *LOOK..!!*

IT'S THE CRUMMY *ROBOT!!* THE ONE I BELTED CLEAN THROUGH THE *WALL!*

WHAT'S HE TRYIN' TA *DO*... MAKE ME FEEL *INSECURE??*

IT'S *NO JOKE,* BEN!

HE'S PROBABLY *INDESTRUCTIBLE!*

WATCH IT!! HE'S *ATTACKING!*

GLAD YA *TOLD* ME, BRIGHT EYES!!

HOW CAN BEN *STOP* HIM??

THOOM!

HE DOESN'T EVEN FEEL MY *EXPLOSIVE FLAME-BLASTS!*

THERE'S STILL *ONE* THING I CAN DO---

I'LL *INTENSIFY* MY FLAME--- MAKE IT HOT ENOUGH TO *MELT* HIS CIRCUITS!!

I'M BETTIN' HE *UNDERSTANDS* YA!

LOOKA THE WAY HE'S *TURNIN' AROUND!*

BUT THEN, BEFORE THE THING CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE---

GAS!!... SHOOTIN' OUTTA HIS *FINGERS!*

GETTIN' IN MY *LUNGS* ...CHOKIN' ME--- CAN'T--- *BREATHE..!*

WOOSH!

BEN *COLLAPSED!!*

...AND THE *ANDROID*... HE'S CAUSING HIS *BODY TEMPERATURE* TO *DROP*...

BELOW THE *FREEZING POINT!*

NOW HE'S HURLING BLASTS OF *COLD* AT ME---

JUST AS HE INUNDATED BEN WITH THE *GAS!*

HOW DO YOU *BEAT* SOMEONE LIKE THAT??

HE CAN DO ALMOST *ANYTHING!*

EVEN THOUGH I CAN DODGE THE *BLASTS*...

THE *COLD WAVE* IS FILLING THE ENTIRE *LAB!!*

I CAN'T MAKE MY FLAME *HOT* ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND IT!

NOT WITHOUT *SCORCHING* REED, BEN AND SUE!!

THEN, WITHIN A MATTER OF SECONDS, THE *INEVITABLE* OCCURS ...

I'M ... *TRAPPED* AGAINST ... THE WALL ...

ENCLOSED IN ... AN *ICE-CRYSTAL* ENVELOPE!!

MY FLAMES -- CAN'T ESCAPE!! *PRESSURE* IS INCREASING ..!!

AND, AS THE PRESSURE MOUNTS BEYOND THE POINT OF *ENDURANCE* ...

SPLAW!

THEN, WHEN THE SMOKE HAS CLEARED ...

REED! THAT *EXPLOSION!!* WHAT *WAS* IT .. ??

I DON'T *KNOW*, DEAR! BUT, IT CAN ONLY MEAN NEW *DANGER!*

I'VE GOT TO GO *BACK!*

WE'LL *BOTH* GO!

I COULDN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF--- *LOSING* YOU AGAIN--!!

NO!! YOU'VE DONE *ENOUGH!* IT'S *MY* FIGHT NOW!! I WON'T *LET* YOU!

YOU'VE SHARED *EVERY* DANGER... ALL THESE YEARS!!

BUT *NOW*... WITH THE *BABY* COMING... YOU *CAN'T!*

YOU *MUST* STAY BEHIND--- THAT'S AN *ORDER*, SUE!!

WILL IT--- *NEVER* END??

MUST IT *ALWAYS* BE... LIKE *THIS*..?

JOHNNY AND BEN ARE STILL *IN* THERE!

I CAN'T LET THEM DOWN IF THEY *NEED* ME!

JOHNNY!!

BEN *WAS* TELLING THE TRUTH!!

THE *THINKER* HAD PLAYED HIS *LAST* CARD!!

THWAP!

ARRHHHH!!

HE'S... REGENERATING... HIS BODY'S ELECTRIC FORCE..!

JOLTING IT BACK AT ME... THROUGH MY ARM..!!

CAN'T... HOLD ON... ANY LONGER!!

IF I DON'T LET GO... I'LL BE ELECTRO-CUTED!!

I'VE.. GOT TO... RELEASE HIM..!

HE'S COMING... AFTER ME... NOW!!

BUT... I'M TOO WEAK TO FIGHT HIM!!

NEED TIME... MORE TIME... TO RECOVER FROM SHOCK..!

BLAM!

IF I CAN JUST HOLD OUT... FOR A FEW MINUTES..!

I'VE GOT TO FEND HIM OFF...

IF I DON'T... THE OTHERS ARE DOOMED!

NOW... MORE THAN EVER... I CAN'T FAIL THEM!!

THIS DOOR... TO THE NEGATIVE ZONE!!

I'VE VOWED NEVER TO OPEN IT AGAIN!

BUT I'VE NO CHOICE!! THE NEED IS TOO GREAT!!

I MADE IT!

I'M INSIDE!

NOW...THE NEXT FEW SECONDS WILL TELL THE STORY!

THE ANDROID'S UNLEASHED HIS ULTIMATE WEAPON...

A RETRACTABLE DISINTEGRATOR!!

THIS IS IT!

I WON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE!!

FAK!

I DID IT!

HE'S STUMBLING THROUGH THE *BARRIER*... INTO THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!!*

ONCE HE PASSES THE *DISTORTION AREA*...THERE'S *NO TURNING BACK!!*

HE'S *FINISHED*... *FOREVER!!*

ETERNALLY *LOST* IN THE ENDLESS REACHES OF AN *ANTI-UNIVERSE!!*

AT THAT MOMENT, THE LOVELY *CRYSTAL* REAPPEARS...

SUE, I HAVE THE *TONIC* YOU SENT ME FOR, AND... *SUE!!*

WHAT'S *WRONG??* WHAT *HAPPENED??*

ANSWER ME... SOMEBODY!!

HERE, CRYSTAL!! IN *HERE*..!!

DON'T... ENTER THE *LAB*...NO MATTER *WHAT!!*

SUE!! WHAT *IS* IT?? *TELL* ME!!

WHERE ARE *JOHNNY*... AND THE *OTHERS??*

IT'S *QUIET* IN THERE NOW! THAT MEANS --- IT'S *OVER!!*

BUT--- I'M *AFRAID!!* --- AFRAID TO EVEN *HOPE*..!!

NO *NEED* TO BE! *LOOK*... *BEHIND* YOU..!!

IT'S *ALL RIGHT*, DARLING!!

WE *WON!!*

BUT, *JOHNNY!!* WHERE IS *JOHNNY*..?

HE'S INSIDE! GO TO HIM, CRYSTAL!

I'VE GOT TO LOOK AFTER *SUE!* SHE'S BEEN THROUGH ...SO *MUCH!*

JOHNNY!! WHERE *ARE* YOU?

IT'S *ME*-- *CRYSTAL!*

I'M *HERE*, JOHNNY!! I'M *HERE!!*

CRYS, HONEY!

BOY! ARE YOU JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED!

YOU'RE NOT HURT! OH, THANK HEAVEN.. YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!

BUT... WHAT ABOUT BEN?

WHAT ABOUT ME, KID?

CAN'T A GUY EVEN GET A LITTLE SHUT-EYE AROUND HERE?

SHEESH!! I FEEL LIKE I JUST CARRIED YANCY STREET... FROM HERE TO THE MOON...

BRICK BY BRICK!!

AFTER WE DEFEATED THE THINKER, I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D STILL BE ABLE TO SEND HIS DEADLIEST ANDROID AFTER US!

ANDROID? WHAT ANDROID?

HEY!! COME TA THINK OF IT... WHAT ABOUT THAT WALKIN' TIME BOMB??

THAT'S RIGHT!! IF HE'S STILL LOOSE... THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT'LL HAPPEN!!

CRYS!! DID YOU SEE HIM?? DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS??

NO! I JUST GOT HERE! I ONLY SAW.. SUE, AND REED!

THAT MEANS THEY'RE DOWN THE HALL!

C'MON... LET'S CHECK 'EM OUT!

BUT, YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME... ABOUT THE ANDROID!

IF HE'S STILL AROUND, WE WON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU!!

YOU KNOW IT, HOT STUFF!

DON'T WORRY, DEAR! I'LL BE... FINE... ONCE I SHUT... MY EYES..!

THAT TONIC WILL MAKE YOU *SLEEP*, SUE!

IT'S WHAT YOU *NEED!*

HEY... WHAT'S GOIN' *ON?*

WHERE'S'AT NUTTY *ROBOT??*

REED MUST HAVE POLISHED HIM *OFF!*

KEEP IT *QUIET*, HEAR? I JUST GOT SUE TO SLEEP!

AS FOR THE *ANDROID...* HE'S *FINISHED!*

I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO TRAP HIM IN THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!*

BUT--IF THERE *WERE* NO NEGATIVE ZONE...

THAT CREATURE WAS PRACTICALLY *UNBEATABLE!* IT COULD HAVE BEEN THE *END* OF US!

SO WHAT?

SO THIS..!

I CAN'T JEOPARDIZE MY WIFE'S *LIFE* ANY LONGER!

ESPECIALLY *NOW...* WHEN SHE'S GOING TO HAVE A *BABY!*

WHAT ARE YA TRYIN' TO *SAY*, MISTER?

I'M NOT *TRYING* TO SAY ANY-THING...

I'M *SAYING* IT!!

SUE AND I ARE *CUTTING OUT!*

I WON'T BE *RESPONSIBLE* FOR ANY MORE *LIVES!*

THAT MEANS... *THE END OF THE FF!!*

CONTINUED.. WE HOPE!

The Fantastic Four #64 unused cover pencils
by Jack Kirby

The Fantastic Four #71 unused cover pencils
by Jack Kirby

The Fantastic Four #61, page 13 original art
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

ONE THING YOU ***CAN'T*** ACCUSE MERRY MARVEL OF IS NOT ENOUGH ***SCENE CHANGES!*** BECAUSE WE SUDDENLY SHIFT OUR ATTENTION TO THE ***METRO COLLEGE STADIUM*** WHERE A HARD-FOUGHT GRIDIRON CONTEST IS IN PROGRESS BETWEEN OL' ***METRO*** AND ***E.S.U.***---

WITH ONLY TWENTY SECONDS REMAINING IN THE FIRST QUARTER, BOTH TEAMS ARE STILL ***SCORELESS!***

THE BIG ***MYSTERY*** OF THE DAY IS---WHO IS THE NEW, SIX-FOOT SIX ***STRANGER*** ON THE METRO BENCH?

AND, WHY HASN'T COACH ***SAM THORPE*** PUT HIM INTO THE GAME YET?

IF ONLY SOMETHING WOULD ***HAPPEN,*** SO I COULD GET A GOOD ***SHOT*** OF IT!

IT'S RUMORED THAT THE UNKNOWN MEMBER OF METRO'S BEEF TRUST IS A FULL-BLOODED ***COMANCHE INDIAN,*** THE SON OF--- ***WAIT! HOLD EVERYTHING!*** WHAT'S ***THAT..???!***

IT DOESN'T MAKE ***SENSE!*** A ***GIRL*** SUDDENLY APPEARED ON THE FIELD.. OUT OF ***NOWHERE!***

AND THERE'S A GIGANTIC STATUE OF A ***DOG*** WITH HER!

NO! IT'S ***NOT*** A STATUE! ***LOOK!*** IT'S ACTUALLY ***ALIVE!***

FOR LONG, INCREDULOUS SECONDS, THE ENTIRE MULTITUDE STANDS ***TRANSFIXED*** --- UNTIL ONE LONE FIGURE RISES TO HIS FULL ***SIX-FOOT-SIX*** HEIGHT, AND STEPS FORWARD ---

I ***KNOW*** WHO SHE IS! I'VE HEARD JOHNNY ***DESCRIBE*** HER TO ME... A THOUSAND TIMES!

BUT, SHE MUSTN'T ***REMAIN*** HERE---WHERE PEOPLE MAY SOON REALIZE WHO---OR ***WHAT*** SHE IS!

MISS! I'VE GOT TO ***TALK*** TO YOU! MY NAME IS ***WYATT WINGFOOT!***

YOU'RE NOT THE ONE I'M LOOKING FOR!

I ***KNOW*** WHOM YOU'RE SEEKING--IT'S ***JOHNNY STORM!*** I'M A ***FRIEND*** OF HIS!

WHAT'S THIS ALL ***ABOUT?*** WHO ***IS*** SHE? HOW'D SHE ***GET*** HERE---AND ***WHY?***

TRUST ME, COACH! I'LL EXPLAIN ***LATER!***

HE ***WAS*** HERE! YOU MISSED HIM BY ***MINUTES!***

HE ***BLAZED OFF*** WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS--!

NEWS? ***WHAT*** NEWS?

HERE---IT'S STILL BEING BROADCAST! ***THIS*** WILL EXPLAIN BETTER THAN ***I*** CAN!

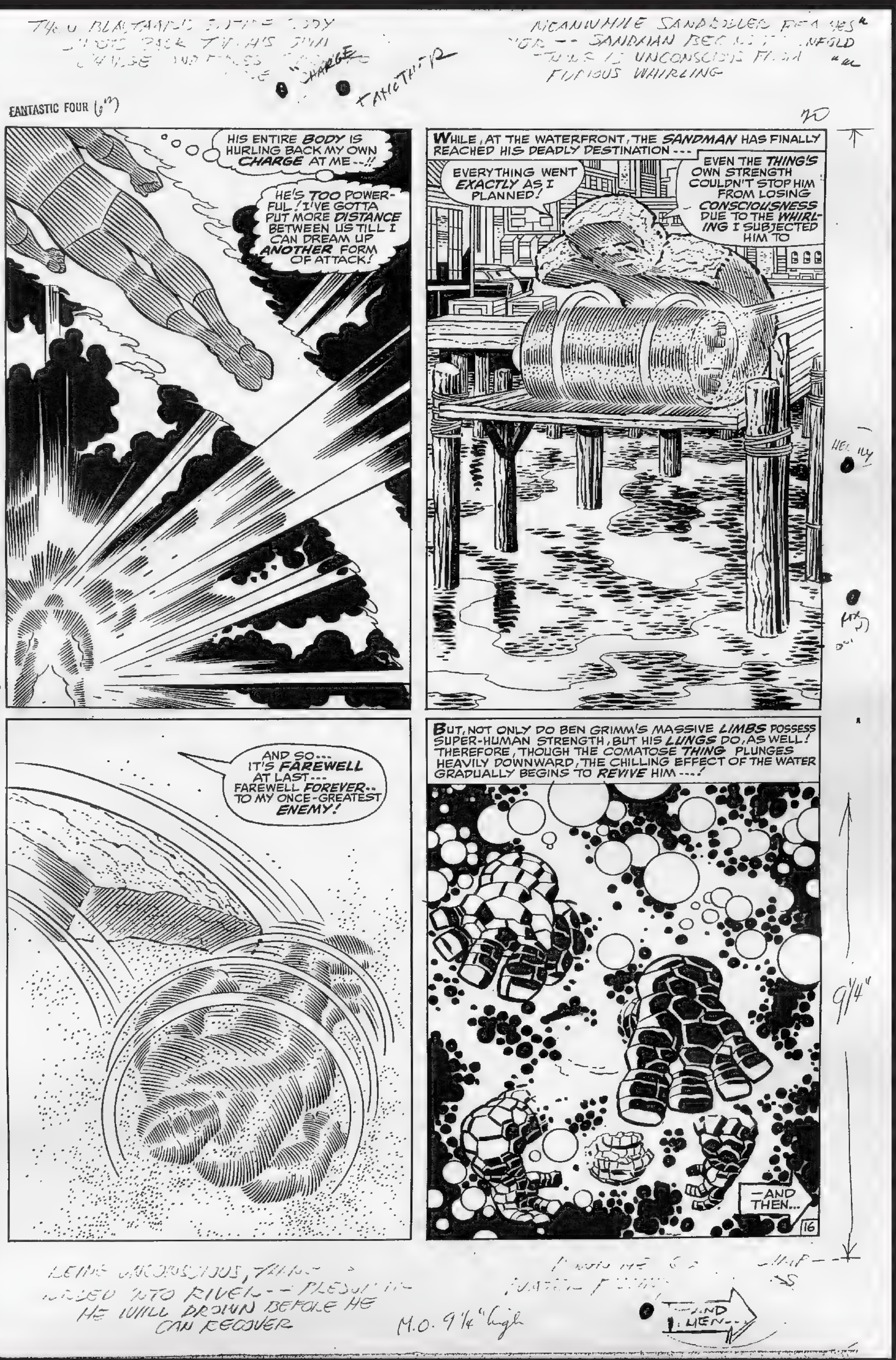
---ALL TRAFFIC IS AT A STANDSTILL IN THE AREA OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS ***BAXTER BUILDING,*** AS THE POLICE STRUGGLE VAINLY TO HOLD BACK THE MYSTIFIED ***CROWDS*** WHO HAVE GATHERED TO THE SCENE OF THE ***FANTASTIC FOUR'S*** BATTLE WITH THE DEADLY ***SANDMAN...!***

THAT MEANS.. HE'S IN ***DANGER!***

13.

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

The Fantastic Four #63, page 16 original art
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott


HIS ENTIRE BODY IS HURLING BACK MY OWN CHARGE AT ME --!!
HE'S TOO POWERFUL! I'VE GOTTA PUT MORE DISTANCE BETWEEN US TILL I CAN DREAM UP ANOTHER FORM OF ATTACK!
WHILE, AT THE WATERFRONT, THE SANDMAN HAS FINALLY REACHED HIS DEADLY DESTINATION ---
EVERYTHING WENT EXACTLY AS I PLANNED!
EVEN THE THING'S OWN STRENGTH COULDN'T STOP HIM FROM LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS DUE TO THE WHIRLING I SUBJECTED HIM TO
AND SO... IT'S FAREWELL AT LAST... FAREWELL FOREVER.. TO MY ONCE-GREATEST ENEMY!
BUT, NOT ONLY DO BEN GRIMM'S MASSIVE LIMBS POSSESS SUPER-HUMAN STRENGTH, BUT HIS LUNGS DO, AS WELL! THEREFORE, THOUGH THE COMATOSE THING PLUNGES HEAVILY DOWNWARD, THE CHILLING EFFECT OF THE WATER GRADUALLY BEGINS TO REVIVE HIM ---!
--AND THEN...
16

The Fantastic Four #66, page 10 original art
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

VERY SIMPLY, IT CAN PROJECT A *PICTURE* OF SOMETHING WHICH HAPPENED IN THE RECENT *PAST*--

BY MEANS OF TRACING THE *HEAT IMAGES* WHICH MAY STILL BE REMAINING IN THE AREA!

THEN YOU *DO* THINK ALICIA MAY BE IN SOME *DANGER*, DEAR?

LOOK, HONEY--WE *BOTH* KNOW SHE'D NEVER STAY AWAY WITHOUT GETTING IN TOUCH WITH *BEN!*

MOREOVER, SHE'S VANISHED WITHOUT A *TRACE*--YET HER *PURSE* WAS STILL IN HER ROOM--

AND, TO *TOP* IT OFF--ABSOLUTELY *NO ONE* SAW HER *LEAVE!*

BUT *WE* DID, DIDN'T WE? AND WHILE WE'RE AT IT, LET'S SEE WHAT'S DOING BACK AT THE SOMEWHAT SINISTER-SEEMING *CITADEL*--!

THOUGH YOU DO NOT *SEE* THEM, THERE ARE DEDICATED MEN ALL ABOUT YOU--

EACH PARTICIPATING IN THE MOST *AMAZING* EXPERIMENT OF ALL TIME!!

BUT, WHAT *IS* THE EXPERIMENT?

--AND WHY DO YOU NEED *ME* --A *BLIND SCULPTRESS*--TO ASSIST YOU??

BECAUSE ONLY SOMEONE WHO IS *SIGHTLESS* WILL BE ABLE TO--*WAIT!!*

I *HEAR* SOMETHING--ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE *WALL!*

IT CAN'T BE *HIM!!* IT'S *TOO SOON!!*

BUT THEN, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER--UTTERLY WITHOUT ANY ADDITIONAL WARNING--

GET *BACK!! BACK!!*

TOO LATE! HE'S *LOOSE* AGAIN!

10

THIS IS ALL I KNOW SO FAR BUT PERHAPS I CAN INTERVIEW SPEC CIAL STAFF MEMBERS WHO HAVE SOLD STORIES TO THIS SERIES -- TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EXISTING STORY

AND GANG ?

The Fantastic Four #66, page 11 original art
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

GUARDS! GUARDS!! WHERE ARE THE GUARDS!!
HE MUST BE STOPPED NOW--WHILE THERE STILL IS TIME!
WE'RE DONE FOR!! ALL OF US! NOTHING CAN STOP HIM NOW!! WE'RE ALL DOOMED!!
I HEAR THE GUARDS! THEY'RE COMING!! THERE'S STILL A CHANCE!

THE GIRL!! IS SHE ALL RIGHT??
THE POOR CHILD DOESN'T UNDERSTAND! WE CAN'T KEEP HER IN THE DARK THIS WAY, MORLAK!
AHH, GOOD! GOOD! UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MUST ANY HARM COME TO HER!-- NOT YET!
I SAY WE TELL HER THE TRUTH! WE HAVE NO CHOICE!

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? NOTHING CAN SAVE US NOW! NOTHING!
SHINSKI!! BE SILENT, YOU SPINELESS OLD FOOL!
HE HASN'T GOTTEN TO US YET! GIVEN ENOUGH TIME-- AND THE HELP OF ALICIA MASTERS-- WE MAY STILL BE TRIUMPHANT!
IT'S SO MAD!! SO INSANE! I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF IT!
DO NOT TROUBLE YOURSELF! THIS VITRA-BROTH I'M POURING WILL HELP YOU TO RELAX!
11.

BOSOM TOO HIGH?

The Fantastic Four #66, page 12 original art
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

FANTASTIC FOUR
IT--IS SO SOOTHING! I FEEL--AS THOUGH ALL MY TROUBLES--ARE JUST MELTING AWAY--!
OF COURSE! IT IS ONE OF OUR LESSER, MORE INCONSEQUENTIAL DISCOVERIES!
AND NOW, SINCE YOU HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO AN EXPLANATION, YOU SHALL HAVE ONE!
BUT, WHERE SHALL I BEGIN--?
I WILL START WITH OUR PRIME PURPOSE--TO ABOLISH WAR, CRIME, AND ILLNESS--BY CREATING A PERFECT RACE OF HUMAN BEINGS!
CREATE HUMAN BEINGS?? HOW??
THAT WAS WHAT WE HAD TO LEARN!
WE CAME TO THIS REMOTE LAND AND PLEDGED OURSELVES TO THE PROJECT!
WE WOULD NEVER LEAVE--NEVER GIVE UP--UNTIL WE HAD CREATED ONE PERFECT HUMAN--WHO WOULD THEN BE THE FORERUNNER OF A SUPREME NEW RACE!
"AFTER YEARS OF UNCEASING EXPERIMENTATION, WE FINALLY CREATED ONE EMBRYONIC CREATURE--WHO LIVES WITHIN A LIFE-CELL TANK--"
"EACH DAY HE HAD BEEN NOURISHED--AS WE WATCHED HIM THRIVE AND GROW--AS WE ADDED MORE AND MORE CONDITIONING CHEMICALS--"
AT LAST, SHINSKI!! AT LAST!!
OUR INSTRUMENTATION SHOWS THAT HE IS NOW REACHING THE STAGE OF ADULTHOOD!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, ZOTA??
HE'S NEARLY READY!! IN A FEW MORE DAYS--WE'LL BE ABLE TO REMOVE HIM!! HE'LL FINALLY EMERGE--FROM THE TANK!
IT WILL BE A GREAT DAY, MORLAK--FOR US ALL!
"BUT THEN--THAT VERY NIGHT--DISASTER STRUCK--!"
THE ALARM!! SOMETHING'S WRONG WITHIN THE TANK!
WE'VE GOT TO BREAK IN!! THOSE ARE MORLAK'S ORDERS!
12

The Fantastic Four #66, page 13 original art
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

CHAMBER IS DARK-- SOMETHING- BIG - SOLID - BIG --
MOVES -- GUARD YELLS -- ITS OUT OF TANK
ANOTHER YELLS -- DONT SHOOT -- THEY WANT IT ALIVE ..
GIVE THE ALARM

HE

FANTASTIC FOUR 66

16

LOOK!! OVER THERE!! IT-- IT'S HIM!!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!! HE--DID IT--BY HIMSELF!!

HE'S FREE!! HE GOT OUT OF THE TANK!

DON'T SHOOT!! HE MUSTN'T BE HARMED!! SEND FOR THE OTHERS!

THE ALARM IS SOUNDING!! THEY'LL BE HERE IN MINUTES!!

QUICKLY! QUICKLY!! NOTHING MUST HAPPEN-- TO HIM!!

MORLAK!! WHAT IF WE'VE TAMPERED WITH SOMETHING--WHICH IS TOO POWERFUL FOR US TO CONTROL??

DON'T BE A FOOL, ZOTA! IT CAN'T--WAIT!!

LOOK!! LOOK AT THE CHAMBER!! IT'S BEEN WRECKED-- AND THE TANK-- IT'S EMPTY!

THAT MEANS--HE'S BROKEN FREE!

IT'S THE ONE THING I FEARED!

YOU'RE TOO LATE!! NOT EVEN YOU CAN STOP HIM NOW! HE'S FREE-- FREE!!

STAND ASIDE, YOU QUIVERING COWARDS!

I'LL APPROACH HIM--MYSELF!!

HE'S OUT OF THE TANK-- BUT HE'S STILL WITHIN THE CHAMBER!! THERE'S HIS SHADOW--MOVING WITHIN!

WE WERE WRONG! HE WASN'T READY TO EMERGE YET! HE'S STILL TOO DANGEROUS!

13

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

The Fantastic Four #65 cover with its original "krackle" background
by Jack Kirby & Joe Sinnott

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